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Fashioning Tradition: Maya *Huipiles* in the Field Museum Collections

J. Claire Odland

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Fashioning Tradition: Maya *Huipiles* in the Field Museum Collections

J. Claire Odland

Abstract

This study analyzes 145 *huipiles* (Maya women's blouses) stored in the Department of Anthropology at the Field Museum. These blouses were collected during the period 1893–1995 from seven towns in the Guatemalan Highlands (Cobán, Santa María de Jesús, San Pedro Sacatepéquez, San Antonio Aguas Calientes, Quetzaltenango, Comalapa, and Chichicastenango). The *huipil*, usually elaborately brocaded by hand on a back strap loom, is a traditional garment that continues to be popular and has great social significance. Changes in *huipil* fashion reflect political, economic, and social change in indigenous women's lives. Textiles are analyzed in the context of specific technological and material innovations, as well as social and historical events, relating these to changes in the *huipil* fashion for each town. Insight into the daily life, family, and gender roles in these communities is illustrated with photographs of *huipiles* in use and being made. Another important issue is the relationship between fashions in *huipiles* and the economic well being of women. Due to the increased political stability brought about by the Peace Accords, greater social mobility and relative prosperity allows Maya women to access *huipil* styles from other communities and to create nontraditional fashions.

Resumen

Modas de Costumbres: *Huipiles* Mayas en la Colección del Field Museum

Este estudio analiza 145 *huipiles* (blusas de las mujeres mayas) que se encuentran depositados en el Departamento de Antropología en el Field Museum. Estas blusas fueron colectadas durante el período de 1893 a 1995, en siete diferentes pueblos en el Altiplano Guatemalteco (Cobán, Santa María de Jesús, San Pedro Sacatepéquez (Gta), San Antonio Aguas Calientes, Quetzaltenango, Comalapa y Chichicastenango). El *huipil* es una vestimenta tradicional que continúa siendo muy popular y que tiene un significado social muy importante. Generalmente tiene un brocado muy elaborado y está hecho a mano con un telar de cintura. Los cambios en el diseño del *huipil* reflejan los cambios políticos, económicos y sociales en la vida de las mujeres indígenas. Los textiles se analizan en el contexto de las innovaciones específicas de la tecnología y los materiales, al igual que los eventos sociales e históricos, relacionando estos cambios en el diseño del *huipil* para cada pueblo. La percepción de la vida cotidiana, la familia y el papel de los diferentes géneros está ilustrada con las fotografías de los *huipiles* que se usan y que se están haciendo. Otro asunto importante es la relación entre diseños en *huipiles* y el bienestar económico de las mujeres. Debido a la estabilidad política reciente, creado por los Acuerdos de Paz, mayor movilidad social y más prosperidad permite que las mujeres mayas puedan tener acceso a otros estilos de *huipiles* de otras comunidades, y de crear diseños no tradicionales.

1. The Field Museum Collection and Its Collectors

Introduction

Clothing, textiles, cloth production, and personal adornment have come to be seen as elements that demonstrate the social, economic, and political continuity and change in a culture. Cloth has an unlimited potential for communication graphically and emblematically. It can reveal age, sex, status, or it can state degrees of group membership and participation in different systems of beliefs, concealing individual identities in military uniforms or religious robes.

The Maya peoples who inhabit the Guatemalan Highlands are well known for their unique style of dress, called *traje*. Women's *traje* consists of a *huipil* (blouse), *corte* (skirt), *faja* (sash), and may include a distinctive headdress, shawl, apron, and overblouse as well. Men's *traje* of pants, belt, shirt, and hat may also include a hip wrap, overpants, jacket, overtunic, and head wrap, any of them significantly designed and decorated. Because each community has developed its own style, form, pattern, and color that serve as symbols of identity and meaning, we can assume that the Maya have practiced their weaving traditions for a long time.

The traditions of weaving are so deeply rooted in Maya culture that almost every Maya woman is taught to weave. Little girls play at weaving from an early age, learning from their mothers, aunts and cousins. By their teens, many are experts. Those who excel may make for those who have less talent or time. As a result, it is not unusual for a woman wearing the traditional *huipil* blouse to have multiple identities at any given time: she can be fashion designer, maker, marketer, and consumer, all wrapped in one.

Changes in fashion have many entangled and interwoven causes, none clear and distinct. Some could be called contagious, where admiration for one dress style provokes imitations or, on the contrary, fear or distaste leads to a style being shunned. This can, of course, take place on an individual or a group level. Other changes can be precipitated by more external events, such as a rise in price of one material or a failure in the supply of another. Individual options are then dependent on the new environment. This monograph will thus reserve the right to return to a topic to discuss the complications of changes and follow wherever they lead.

This study is based on museum research analyzing 145 *huipiles* from seven municipalities from the Quiché region, Chichicastenango and Quetzaltenango; from the Kaqchiquel region, San Antonio Aguas Calientes, San Juan Comalapa, Santa María de Jesús, and San Pedro Sacatepequez (Department of Guatemala); and from the Kekchi region, the Cobán area of Alta Verapaz. From 1994 to 2005, the author repeatedly visited the area to work with women's cooperatives in San Juan Comalapa and San Antonio Aguas Calientes. *Huipiles* from these municipalities held at the Textile Museum, Washington, DC, the American Museum of Natural History, New York, the Maudslay Collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, the Ixchel Museum in Guatemala, and the private and extensive DuFlon Collection in Antigua, Guatemala, have also been considered. The *huipil* was selected for this study because it is a traditional garment still in wide popular use and because its use seems to have great social significance. Examples both in the Collection and worn on the street today are highly artistic and require great technical skill to produce.

The word *huipil* is taken from the Nahuatl language, "*huipilli*," but is now in common use throughout Mesoamerica. The *huipil* worn today by the indigenous Maya women of Guatemala has not changed substantially since the Conquest. One finds this same tunic or blouse sewn of unbleached rectangular pieces of cloth, woven to size, portrayed on ancient Maya and Aztec archeological pots and carvings and clay figures of women, and drawings from the Códices of the conquest of Mesoamerica (Anawalt, 1981). The writings and illustrations of 16th century Spanish chroniclers such as Bernal Díaz de Castillo and Remesal portray men wearing loincloths or tunics with capes and women dressed in wrapped skirts and a variety of *huipiles* (Anawalt, 1990; Deuss, 1981, 24). Pre-Columbian *huipiles* ranged from the humble maguey fiber to the finest cotton, plain or ornamented with gold, silver, and feathers.

Following the Conquest, indigenous populations were gathered into *reducciones* (forced settlements) to work the land and pay taxes and tributes, some in the form of cloth or thread. It has been suggested that the uniform, village-specific dress found in approximately 150 highland towns was created by the Spanish to identify and control subject populations. Others say that this standardization developed naturally due to the isolation of the region. The research for this article does not substantiate the concept of enforced

standardized costumes, rumored to be called "*traje de sangre*" or clothes of blood. The origin of this term and whether it refers to lineage or to violence would be worthy of a separate study. Because the records from this period do not say, it is ultimately unclear how each village developed its distinctive style of dress.

Venturing into the Guatemalan Highlands, one finds steep, rugged hills, volcanic mountain chains, and cloud forests that separate high valleys and bowls. The Highlands suffer frequent earthquakes, destroying the then-capital of Ciudad Vieja in 1541, and demolishing San Juan Comalapa in 1976. Only very recently were paved roads built through the rugged, mountainous terrain or the large lowland jungle. Even large towns, such as Comalapa, were still accessible only by dirt roads as late as 1995, and craftsmen and traders of the village specialties were the only effective links between villages. As recently as 1990, it was not unusual to see traders following mountain trails with their goods on a wooden back frame (*cacaste*), supported by a tumpline (*mecapal*). Villages are also separated by ethnic diversity. Among the 19 indigenous languages, the four principal are Quiché, Mam, Kaqchiquel, and Kekchí (Figs. 1 and 2).

Periods of Collection

The Field Museum Collection of Maya Textiles spans a century, containing more than 500 women's garments, including 70 headdresses, 75 belts and sashes, 38 skirts, and 15 shawls in addition to the 230 *huipiles* and other items. The women's sash, skirt, headdress, and man's headdress are also indicators of distinction and worthy of further study.

The dates that people were visiting Guatemala and collecting reflect the social climate of the times. Many of the historical textiles at the Field Museum were accessioned following the 1893 Chicago Columbian World's Fair. During the period of archeological exploration following World War I, J. Eric Sidney Thompson, Assistant Curator of Mexican and South American Archaeology, conducted three Captain Marshal Field Expeditions to British Honduras in 1927, 1928–1929, and 1931. Between World Wars I and II, Guatemala experienced a period of growth and stability, reflected in the number of women traveling and collecting there. Florence D. Bartlett (who later became one of the Founders of the Museum of

International Folk Art in Santa Fe, New Mexico), Alice H. Gregory, Mrs. Hedwig Mueller, Catherine McQuarrie, and Mrs. Harold Norman provided the Field Museum with a number of *huipiles* and other garments collected between 1935 and 1941.

No *huipiles* dating from the years of World War II are found in the Collection. The sequence resumes with pieces collected by Caroline Van Evera during the years 1947–1949. Nothing in the Museum was collected between the American-led coup of 1954 and the earthquake of 1976, when Kate Marks visited the country. Following the restoration of civil order in the late 1980s, Carol Hendrickson collected in Tecpán during the early 1990s as part of her fieldwork on textile studies. The author collected *huipiles* as worn on the street in 1994. William Goldman collected during the 1980s and 1990s and donated his collection in 2002. In 2003, Kate and Tony Marks donated their collection, which dates from 1916 to 1989.

Township Signature Elements

What are the signature elements in the communities studied, and how have they responded to changing conditions? What is the fashion in each of these seven towns? How has the fashion in one town affected another? What are some possible reasons for the flow of fashion?

Examples of continuity and change are plentiful. The continued popularity of the eagle emblem of Chichicastenango may illustrate this community's successful survival. In Cobán, technology has been used to translate traditional figured gauze weave into eyelet or machine-made lace. Quetzaltenango and San Pedro Sacatepéquez, like Cobán, have used improved technology to manufacture and supply popular styles of *huipil* to other towns while maintaining their own favored styles and color schemes. Comalapa *huipiles* have continued to feature their distinctive red shoulder bar. The extraordinary brocade technique of San Antonio Aguas Calientes *huipiles* displays that town's unusual wealth and prestige and has been widely copied, and Santa María de Jesús has preserved a diversity of styles.

CHICHICASTENANGO—The Quiché town of Santo Tomás Chichicastenango has been famous for its markets since the 1930s, when a fine hotel was built there. The Mayan Inn, and the good road to it, brought tourism and outside trade to what was already a great market center. Many museum col-

lections feature numbers of *huipiles* from Chichicastenango dating from the 1930s to the present, probably due to the accessible and comfortable, yet exotic, atmosphere. Most of the indigenous population of the rural, outlying areas comes in to town only for markets, holy days, and fiestas.

The Field Collection from Chichicastenango spans the years from 1916 to 1995. The traditional *huipil* 2393.190005 (Fig. 3) is made in three panels, with a round neck cut in the center panel. It is made long, to tuck into the skirt, except for the ceremonial *huipil* (which is left hanging out), and the sides are sewn up to the point of the armholes. Typically, the center panel is brocaded more deeply than the sides, and if the garment were laid flat, the brocade design would present a cross. The joining seams on older *huipiles* usually have a decorative, embroidered "*randa*." Over the years, this detail has transformed into brocade. The signature "sun" design of appliqué trim around the neck has remained remarkably unchanged in design. Stitching around this trim was hand-embroidered chain stitch in the 1920s, while now it is likely to be done by machine. The "sun" fabric was originally strictly blue taffeta, until black was introduced in the 1960s (Rowe, 1981, p. 86). Now any color neck trim can be seen.

Traditionally, the distinctive double-headed eagle motif over the breast (*pecho*) was repeated smaller on the side panels, on a solid-color cotton ground of handspun natural white or natural brown cotton, which has been replaced by commercial cotton. In *huipil* 1935.189256 (Fig. 4), the brocade is single faced, with red or magenta in the continuous supplementary wefts and multi-color accents of discontinuous supplementary wefts. (These techniques are discussed in the section, Backstrap Loom Weaving.) From 1900 through 1930, brocade threads were usually of cotton, silk, or maroon wool. Magenta silk was especially popular for brocade in the 1930s.

The 1940s saw Chichicastenango weavers using even more red with contrasting color accents, and more diamonds and zigzags appeared to surround the eagles. In the 1950s, the smaller eagles began to disappear from the side panels, replaced by geometric diamonds or zigzags. Until the 1960s, the area around the central eagle was filled with small multicolor dots or geometric or floral motifs.

During the 1960s, brocade so filled the breast area that the central eagle was practically hidden, concealed in the camouflage of an all-over diamond pattern. At this time, naturalistic flower de-

signs, taken originally from cross-stitch pattern books and popularized by the wealthy weavers of San Antonio Aguas Calientes, became fashionable. The *huipil* 3967.191499 (Fig. 5) may be a copy of this San Antonio style, but as we will see later, it is rough in comparison and the brocade is single-faced, not two-faced. Also during the 1960s, a labor-saving technique seen earlier in San Pedro Sacatepéquez was adopted, resulting in a new alignment of the tie-down warps. Before this, Rowe (1981, p. 86) points out that warp threads were picked out one by one. "In the new technique, a small extra shed rod is placed under all of the warps between the columns of design, so that all may conveniently be raised at once." This creates a ribbed effect, with a thick, velvety textured brocade. The *huipil* 4164.28 (Fig. 6) utilizes this technique, where a modernist floral design is arranged in the traditional cross layout and appliquéd with the traditional sun and moon medallions.

In comparing the dress of the market women in Chichicastenango and Cobán, we find most of the indigenous women in both towns wearing the *huipil* and the fashionable skirt of the area. Both groups wear their hair long and tied back, and some use a sweater instead of the traditional shawl. The Chichicastenango women (Fig. 7) have tucked in their much heavier *huipiles*, while the Cobán women (Fig. 8) wear their much lighter *huipils* out, over camisoles or slips, in spite of the cool weather.

THE COBÁN AREA, ALTA VERAPÁZ—Cobán, in the relatively remote northern highland state of Alta Verapáz, has had a history unlike the other highland communities. Following the Conquest, Alta Verapáz was somewhat protected from the worst of the Spanish exploitation by Fray Bartolomé de las Casas. According to Gordon (1993, p. 28) this had an effect on the development of dress styles.

[T]he indigenous population did not receive treatment as brutal as that typical elsewhere. In the 1870s, the area was settled by German coffee growers, whose relationship with the indigenous people was also comparatively benign. As a result, the Indians of the region did not build up quite the same kind of ethnic animosity and cultural resistance, and their identification was regional as well as community-based. . . . The same kind of fluidity that made a community-based *traje* less critical in this region and allowed for a blending of native styles also contributed to a relatively high rate of ladinoization or acculturation, and a freer mixing of Indian and native customs and ideas. Commercial

polyester and lace fabrics were popular at an early date, and even indigenous styles showed distinct Western influence.

Thus, women of one town often wore the *huipiles* of another, so that, by 1950, it was hard to determine the origins of either a *huipil* or its wearer. Community-based *traje* may still be worn on ceremonial occasions and for burial (Gordon, 1993, pp. 28–29).

Fifteen of the 20 Cobán *huipiles* from the Collection are completely white. The oldest Cobán *huipil* in the Collection, 1741.103709 (Fig. 9), is brightly colored in red, green, gold, and white with perfectly executed figures. Most of the others are trade pieces unfinished at the neck and arms. All are of three panels, hand joined with a whip-stitch, and, whether backstrap-loomed or treadle-loomed, present fine gauze-weave or plain-weave bands running horizontally. In Cobán brocade, we find single-faced supplementary wefts of heavier white thread, creating figures of birds and animals, star-flowers, men on horseback, and small geometric figures.

During the 1960s, a new type of *huipil* emerged, trimmed at the neck with brightly colored floral embroidery supported by a commercial cloth backing. This style offers women free reign to exercise their individual taste and imagination. The *huipil* 3318.192213 (Fig. 10) appears, at first glance, to be backstrap loomed. But at the lower hem, the fabric has been cut and trimmed with commercial lace eyelet fabric, either to hide the tell-tale signs of a backstrap-loom selvage or to cover the hem of cut commercial yardage. Because backstrap-loomed fabric is so much more costly than floor-loomed fabric, we can conclude that this *huipil* was probably made on a floor loom.

Although older Cobán *huipiles* contained many motifs instilled with myths and legends (discussed in the section on Symbolism), more modern *huipiles* have fewer motifs, and those that do appear are unlikely to carry symbolic meaning. The *huipil* 2648.242213 (Figs. 11 and 12) utilizes gauze weave (discussed in the section Types of Weave) and both it and 3266.243980 (Fig. 13) present rows of traditional figures. Because both *huipiles* are unfinished, they were probably made for commercial sale, to be cut, sewn, and trimmed to the wearer's taste. Although *huipiles* are still worn by a large percentage of the women, they are now

typically made of commercial fabric. The brocade motifs are not symbolic but a more generalized style.

SAN JUAN COMALAPA—San Juan Comalapa is a typical indigenous town. As recently as 2005, most women here wore *traje* every day and some traditional ceremonial wear could be seen as well. The town was nearly leveled in 1976 by a tremendous earthquake. Hundreds died and most of the homes and the cathedral were destroyed. The need to rebuild and reestablish the identity of the town may have led the residents to express their strength and solidarity by continuing to wear the traditional *huipil*. Visiting the market in 1996, one would find women wearing the local *huipil* with its bright-red shoulder bar, a virtual "team uniform." At a thread stall in the Comalapa market (Fig. 14), two women wear matching *huipiles* with these red shoulder bars as well as similar brocade figures, square necks, and trimmed arm openings.

Although the newer styles worn in Figure 14 are three-panel *huipiles*, historically the Comalapa *huipil* is usually made in two panels and has a front slightly more elaborate than the back. Traditionally, the neck opening is left as a slit in the center seam. In design, all the *huipiles* in the Collection contain the signature red shoulder bar, called the *creya*, and multicolored weft stripes, called separators, that divide and organize rows of brocade figures.

Old ceremonial *huipiles* are made of beautiful, handspun natural brown cotton known as *ixcaco*, brocaded in silk, wool, and cotton. These are *sobrehuipiles*, or overblouses, worn without putting the hands through the armholes, as modeled by Doña Lucía Serech (Fig. 15). *Sobrehuipiles* appear only at ceremonies or festivals, when a woman need not do much more than carry a ritual object. The *sobrehuipil* has white weft stripes, multicolored clusters of weft stripes, bands of white brocaded designs at lower front garment edge, and other weft stripes created with plied blue and white threads. The *huipil* 3523.42812 (Fig. 16) has a small, embroidered medallion at the neck and tiny black patches along the lower hem.

The Museum is fortunate to possess everyday wear as well as ceremonial. Possibly because they are so much plainer, they were not as interesting to collectors, and thus are scarcer in museum collections. *Huipiles* for daily use are worn tucked into the skirt, necessarily with the arms through the armholes, leaving the hands free for tasks. In

Comalapa, this style was much simpler in make and materials, made with a white cotton ground, fewer figures, and of course the red shoulder bar. The *huipil* 3759.269639 (Fig. 17) has a wide, single-faced brocade wool *creya*, plied blue and white weft stripes, and brocaded silk and wool animal and geometric figures. The small rhombi, alternating with star-like figures, may be the ancient symbol, *rupan lâq* or *rupan plato*. This name refers to the contents of a decorated ceramic dish, ritual offerings of bread and fruit carried to church by members of the *cofradía*, and later shared.

Over time, the red *creya* gradually became narrower, and less silk was used in the figures. During the 1930s, the naturalistic forms popularized by San Antonio Aguas Calientes weavers or learned from embroidery pattern books gained popularity, as did geometric figures, and came to replace many of the traditional geometric and animal motifs.

One unusual piece deserves particular attention. The *huipil* 2393.190059 (Fig. 18) is distinguished by a rare, three-panel construction and is trimmed with Chichicastenango-style ribbon medallions, but conforms to all the other traditional Comalapa elements and contains only the old-style figures. “This type of *sobrehuipiles* [sic] was probably worn by the *capitanas* [*cofradía* office holders] during the first decades of this century. O’Neale (1945) did not report it in 1936, and none of the older informants remembered it” (Asturias de Barrios, 1985, p. 80). This would suggest a date of manufacture far earlier than the stated collection date of 1935.

The *huipil* 2977.190635 (Fig. 19) is in the traditional style: a horizontal tree of life at the shoulder, a smaller *creya*, multicolored weft stripes that largely fill up the body, and a small band of tiny figures at the bottom of the brocade area, showing people harvesting corn on one side and small S figures on the other. Both of these have plainly bound neck and armholes, and both are worn. This basic style in either two or three panels was still popular in Comalapa in 2005.

SAN ANTONIO AGUAS CALIENTES—Tax (1963) described San Antonio Aguas Calientes as a wealthy indigenous town, blessed with good agricultural land, and located close enough to the capital for good transportation but far enough away to allow for autonomy. Today it has the highest indigenous female literacy rate for any such village, and the women of San Antonio Aguas Calientes are long accustomed to hearing

themselves rated the best weavers in the country. A work published in 1874 noted that “the school of San Antonio is run by a good writer and expert mathematician for the children’s section, and that the teacher is superb at sewing, embroidery and all the arts of the fair sex” (Arriola de Geng, 1991, p. 142).

The older *huipiles* in the Collection illustrate the difficulties of determining the provenance of marketable fashions. Two *huipiles* attributed to San Antonio Aguas Calientes or nearby Antigua were collected by J. Eric Thompson and accessioned in 1929. The *huipil* 1820.188510 (not shown) is treadle loomed and was probably made in the Totonicapán area. *Huipil* 1820.188540 (Fig. 20) is backstrap loomed in a simple, single-faced brocade of geometric figures, and was probably made in San Martín Jilotepeque (Schevill et al., 1993, pp. 10–11).

In general, San Antonio Aguas Calientes *huipiles* collected during the 1930s present a multichromatic palette on a dark ground, frequently indigo. They are made in two panels, with the neck opening left unsewn and the seams at sides and center whipstitched. Frequently, the neck and arms are trimmed in velvet or other commercial cloth. Unfortunately, all but two have had the neck and arm trimmings removed. Because of the beauty and prestige of this community’s weavings, the *huipiles* are often purchased by tourists as art and it appears that removing these trims improves their appeal. The *huipil* 2393.189967 (Fig. 21) displays a wealth of finely detailed brocade figures. Contemporary weavers employ the same figures today.

Earlier pieces are brocaded only in single face, usually in two colors on a white ground. Later pieces have many colored brocades on a bright ground. They typically have fine and complex silk or cotton brocade patterns of dots, zigzags, lattices, and diamonds, and the naturalistic designs taken from European-style pattern books. Like the two *huipiles* mentioned above, *huipil* 3523.42815 (Fig. 22) was not purchased in the place of its making but in Chichicastenango, probably from a trader in the big market there.

Sometime during the 1930s, an extraordinary brocade technique appeared in San Antonio Aguas Calientes. This double-faced brocade displays identical patterns on both sides of the textile. (Details of the technique are described in the section Brocade Terminology). At first, the technique was used in smaller horizontal bands, with the rest of the *huipil* brocaded in single-face. The

popularity of this rich and beautiful brocade increased over the years, and *huipiles* from the 1990s are now often covered in double-faced brocade. De Jongh Osborne, oddly enough, makes no mention of this technique, which must have been at least beginning during the time of her fieldwork during the 1930s. O'Neale (1966, pp. 75–76) describes this in terms of *soumak* or warp wrapping, but found it used only on smaller motifs. Because most of these *huipiles* are sewn up the sides, it was not possible to show many of the reverse sides. The large floral patterns in *huipil* 3850.167017 (Figs. 23 and 24) show great expertise with this type of brocade.

SANTA MARÍA DE JESÚS—The town of Santa María de Jesús lies on the slopes of the volcano Agua. It is only 10 kilometers from the beautiful colonial *ladino* city of Antigua via 10 kilometers of mountainous road still unpaved in 1999. Women traders selling to the big Antigua tourist market are well acquainted with the styles of traders from other villages, as well as the styles of the tourists in Antigua. This may be why Santa María de Jesús is home to so many styles of *huipiles*. There are 10 named styles of *huipiles* belonging to this village, each in a customary color palette. It is possible that the strong elements of fashion and change that are visible here are an example of the future of Guatemalan indigenous dress. As elsewhere in Guatemala, *huipil* styles here indicate the wearer's social rank, economic status, age, ability as a weaver, and sense of fashion. However, because of the wide range of styles, the women of Santa María may have been the first to display a cosmopolitan knowledge of other town's styles.

Although usually seen in a color scheme of red and white, the *huipil* 1820.188547 (Fig. 25), purchased in Chichicastenango in 1929, is a "classic" Santa María style that dates back to the early 1920s, according to Asturias de Barrios (1991, p. 107). These *Tenanza huipiles* are historically worn by the women of the brotherhoods called *cofradías* (discussed in the section *Cofradías*). The *huipil* 2977.190639 (Fig. 26) is typical of this style, done in "the old style," and made in three panels, whipstitched in red (Asturias de Barrios, 1991, pp. 106, 116). It has a ground of unmercerized natural white cotton and even pairs of red warp stripes. The center panel is deeply brocaded in two faces, mostly in cotton with accents of silk. Motifs include a horizontal tree of life at the shoulder, linked diamonds, an elaborate zigzag known as *kix* or *kumatz'in* (thorn or spine, or ser-

pent, respectively) in Kaqchikel, large birds, figures of men and women, two-headed eagles, and small snakes, ending with open ground. These human figures or dolls (*muñecos*) were said to represent the man and woman united by marriage to form a couple, on which all social values rest (Knoke de Arathoon, 2005, pp. 2–3). Also called a *nim po't* or big *huipil*, it was worn over another *huipil* out, over the skirt. Except for the color scheme and the warp stripes, the figures are very like those in Figure 25.

The "*piecha*" is known locally as "the true *huipil* of Santa María" and is associated with women of the middle class (Asturias de Barrios, 1991, pp. 76, 118). Typically, as in the *huipil* 2977.190640 (Fig. 27), the body is covered from shoulder to waist with interlocked diamonds, edged at the waist with a geometric border. Although not clearly defined, the diamonds of this pattern are called "center of community" (*centro del pueblo* in Spanish and *ruk'ux taramit* in the local Kaqchikel) (Knoke de Arathoon, 2005, pp. 11). The *piecha* is usually seen in blue, green, purple, and pink. This style has been popular for 70 years, cited in the 1930s (O'Neale, 1966, inside cover), in 1988 (Asturias de Barrios, 1991, p. 78), as well as personal observation in 2005. Elements of this style can also be seen in Figures 25 and 26.

Often worn as a wedding *huipil*, the "quetzal" style may have been introduced in the 1940s from Totonicapán (Asturias de Barrios, 1991, p. 115). Rather than brocaded, it is elaborately embroidered from shoulder to waist on both front and back. It is called the quetzal *huipil* because the design features a pair of resplendent quetzals (the national bird of Guatemala) facing each other in the center, surrounded by flowers and foliage. In the *huipil* 12.442 (Fig. 28), machine embroidery covers a treadle-loomed *huipil* extravagantly trimmed in red velvet, yellow braid, and metallic ribbon.

Other named styles of *huipil* are the Comb; the *Sampedrano* (in the manner of San Pedro Sacatepéquez); the Cobañero (in the manner of Cobán), the San Antonio style of naturalistic flowers; the Branch; and the *Perraje*, which is made of treadle-loomed shawl (*perraje*) fabric (Fig. 29) of stripes and simple figures, and is worn only by the poorest women.

SAN PEDRO SACATEPÉQUEZ—San Pedro Sacatepéquez is located in the Department of Guatemala only 22 kilometers from Guatemala City, in what was a cool, forested highlands, and is now a sub-

urb of the capital. The town, like Comalapa, was devastated in the earthquake of 1976. Houses of adobe and tile have now been replaced by houses of cement block and corrugated roofs. The town became an important textile center in the 1930s, with treadle looms producing yard goods and draw looms creating *huipiles* richly brocaded in silk. It is still known for the blue fabric to be made into the skirts known as *morgas* worn throughout the region.

The everyday San Pedro *huipil* is fabricated in two panels, hand whipstitched or embroidered in the center and left open at the sides. It is brocaded predominantly in horizontal bands of purple and red figures throughout the length, with geometric figures, mainly zigzags, across the breast in a solid band of brocade and scattered, smaller figures below that. The ground cloth is usually natural, unbleached cotton, often with red and purple selvedge warps. The unfinished backstrap-loomed *huipil* 1820.188528 (Fig. 30) acquired in San Pedro was probably made in San Martín Jilotepeque in the style of San Pedro (Schevill, 1993, pp. 10, 11).

A tiny *huipil* in the traditional style, 4164.54 (Fig. 31), was woven to clothe the figure of a saint. Ceremonial styles in the Collection include 2393.190066 (Fig. 32) and 3312.288129 (Fig. 33), which have a tree of life or interlocked two-headed eagles across the shoulders. In these older *huipiles*, the figures are smaller, finely done, and spaced apart on the background. The round neck and the neckline finish were important traditional elements, though the details may be partly obscured by a newer applied or embroidered binding.

The tree of life (*kotz'i'jan* in Kaqchiquel) is an ancient and important symbol in the wedding and ritual dress *huipil*. Like a flowering, fruit-bearing tree, a traditional woman bears children, renewing and regenerating the community. In her work on symbols, Knoke de Arathoon (2005, pp. 13–14) describes the connection the Maya feel between plant and human regeneration. The “tree of the world” represents the origin, end and center of everything, a strong metaphor tightly linking vegetation, the woman, the *cofradía*, and the community.

En la concepción maya el árbol de la vida parece representar la regeneración vegetal y humana, concepto aplicable a la vida y costumbres del pueblo. En el caso de la cosmovisión atiteca tradicional, la misma idea se expresa pues el “árbol del mundo” representa tanto el origen como el final y el

centro de todo. Es el axis mundi que renueva y regenera al pueblo y que está estrechamente vinculado a la mujer y a la cofradía, entidad en la que se le emplea como una fuerte metáfora (Carlsen, 1997b, pp. 47–67). Es una metáfora de la vegetación, la mujer, la cofradía y el pueblo.

In translation, in Maya thought, the tree of life seems to represent plant and human regeneration, a concept applicable to the life and customs of the community. In the case of traditional *atiteca* (from the town of San Juan Atitlán) cosmovision, the same idea is expressed so that the “tree of the world” represents as much the origin as the end and the center of everything. It is the *axis mundi* that renews and regenerates the community and is tightly linked to the woman and the *cofradía*, the essence of which is used as a strong metaphor (Carlsen, 1997b, pp. 47–67). It is a metaphor of plant life, woman, the *cofradía*, and the community.

Another specialty of San Pedro Sacatepéquez is weaving “in the waffled manner called ‘*poroj*’” (Aguilar, 1983, p. 6). The Collection includes several examples: 2393.190066 (see Fig. 32) is particularly fine, with a raised, puffy texture to the ground cloth. The use of aquamarine silk dates it to the first two decades of this century (Aguilar, 1983, p. 10). Both it and the *huipil* 3312.288129 (see Fig. 33) are probably ceremonial *huipiles*, with the single-faced brocaded motifs extending to the bottom, indicating that they were worn over the skirt instead of tucked in. Sides are unsewn, and the shoulder bands are of interlocked two-headed eagles. The materials, design, quality of work, and perfection of alignment are all of the highest standards.

The historical photograph (Fig. 34) by Valdeavellano shows women wearing *huipiles* similar to Figures 32 and 33, only slightly simpler. They seem to have the same figured shoulder band and arrangement of zigzag stripes, scattered figures, selvedge stripes, round necks and unsewn side seams. The young girl wears a less elaborate *huipil* appropriate to her age.

QUETZALTENANGO—The city of Quetzaltenango is frequently known by its Quiché name of Xela. By the 1880s, it had evolved into a major population center, important, with an array of neo-classical buildings impressive enough to contest the location of the capital of the country. Quetzaltenango had both rail and road connections, making available the trade goods, communications, and outside influences that most regions lacked. Nearby towns, such as Totonicapán, produced com-

mercially floor-loomed *huipiles* for trade, sold to be finished by the buyer, and Salcajá dyed the *jaspé* or space-dyed thread widely used in *huipiles* and in cotton skirt fabric.

The oldest *huipil* in the Collection, 162.188862 (Fig. 35), was a gift of the Government of Guatemala to the 1893 Chicago Colombian Exposition. Many of the older ethnic textiles in the Field Museum were acquired following this event. This particular *huipil* appears to have been donated to the Exposition as a superb example of industrial textile production replacing an indigenous method, probably viewed as quaint or “backward” to contemporary eyes. It is very finely made of commercially spun cotton, silk, and wool, in one panel, on a treadle loom. Because 162.188862 is such a special case, it cannot be considered the traditional town template. However, it does possess many of the classic features: a purple and gold color scheme; two-faced brocaded figures organized in rows; and a round neck embroidered with flowers. Because an embroidered *randa* was required by tradition to join the two panels of narrow, backstrap-loomed cloth, a nonfunctional *randa* was added in silk where this seam would have been. This causes a pucker in the area that would have been tucked into the skirt.

All the everyday Quetzaltenango *huipiles* in the Collection are treadle loomed, with long, lower sections left plain to be tucked into the skirt as a sort of petticoat. This can be seen on the single *huipil* panel 1820.188551 (Fig. 36), collected in 1927. Until about 1930, everyday *huipiles* were made in two panels and, after that, in three. The traditional design in the *huipil* 2393.190017 (Fig. 37) is organized in rows of brocaded figures in the prevalent color combination of purple and yellow-gold. It is densely brocaded in gold and purple on the breast area of all three panels, in a geometric pattern that typically alternates with black-and-white *jaspé* or plied weft stripes. The round neck is covered with embroidered flowers and both it and the armholes are bound in commercial cloth. Elaborate embroidered *randas* join the panels.

In Figure 38, taken by the historical photographer Zanotti around 1930, we see Quiché women in *huipiles* with patterns like 2393.190017 (see Fig. 37) that could have been sewn and embroidered by each wearer to her taste, while the men, even the little boy, wear western clothes.

As in other regions, ceremonial *huipiles* were usually worn draped loosely on top of an everyday *huipil*. In Quetzaltenango, however, they were

worn over the head, with the face framed by the embroidered neck. These long *sobrehuipiles* were made on treadle looms in three panels of open plain weave, brocaded in cotton or silk, with elaborately embroidered neck trims and *randas* covering or joining the seams. According to some sources, the *cofradía huipil* was brocaded in white on a white ground, and the wedding *huipil* in purple and gold on white. The *huipil* 2393.190013 (Fig. 39) is treadle loomed, with brocade threads in silk and cotton, hemmed at the bottom and hand embroidered in cotton at neck and *randa* seams. As with the ceremonial *huipil* of Comalapa, wearing this *huipil* made using the hands nearly impossible (see Fig. 15). As portrayed in this 1935 photograph (Fig. 40), the ceremonial *huipil* of Quetzaltenango was worn over the head like a veil.

The newest *huipil* in the Collection, 3967.191502 (Fig. 41), is treadle loomed, from the factory “Xelatec,” as is marked in pen on the ground area of white cotton hidden by the skirt. At Easter processions in 1995 (Fig. 42), the well-dressed, middle-class indigenous women in Quetzaltenango were photographed wearing this blouse, tucked into a full, gathered indigo-blue or *jaspé* plaid skirt, with a narrow sash over the waistband. This was worn with a long, ruffled apron, sometimes with a bib, decorated with machine embroidery, cut-work, brass rivets, and metallic braid. The outfit was completed with a striped *perraje* (rectangular shawl) with a fringe of big pompoms. Hair was worn in a long ponytail, and shoes were either low-heeled pumps or dressy sandals. With the exception only of their shoes, the women in Zanotti’s 1930s photograph (see Fig. 38) could fit right into this Easter parade 60 years later.

The Flow of Fashion

Copying is nothing new in women’s fashions. Individual motifs or trims that may have been at one time exclusive to one region can be widely replicated or reinterpreted. The two-headed eagle was traditionally used as the central figure in the Chichicastenango *huipil* (see Figs. 3 and 4), as a shoulder bar in the small repeating figures of San Pedro Sacatepéquez shoulder bar (see Figs. 32 and 33), and as part of the complicated patterns on Santa María de Jesús *cofradía huipiles* (see Figs. 25 and 26). Other popular motifs include the corn plant of Quetzaltenango (see Fig. 37) and

Cobán (see Figs. 9 and 12). Elements that have not spread from their home domains are the red shoulder bar of San Juan Comalapa, the all-over embroidered quetzal pattern of Santa María de Jesús, and the specific color scheme of yellow and purple of Quetzaltenango. These days, *huipil* styles may be adopted wholly as purchased fashions, such as the lacey white Cobán *huipil*. Smocking and tailoring of *huipiles* is a new fashion, seen on 4164.29 (Fig. 43).

European-style cross-stitch patterns have been available in Guatemala since the 1800s, when they were published in color, for use in embroidery and needlepoint, and applied to weaving by counting threads. These books of stylized and geometric patterns were taught to girls in convent schools and spread eventually to indigenous villages to add to the existing repertoire of traditional motifs. Unlimited variations in color, scale, fineness, tightness, combinations and simplifications attest to the skill and ingenuity of individual weavers.

In the 1930s, *huipiles* from San Antonio Aguas Calientes in museum collections began to display patterns from these cross-stitch books of geometric figures in a band, first placed only on the shoulders. These patterns became more and more elaborate until riotous combinations of floral motifs, fish and birds came to cover almost the entire *huipil*. This double-faced supplementary weft brocade, identical on both sides of the *huipil*, is called *marcador*. The process greatly increases the weight, the amount of yarn, and the time required. Accordingly, this enhances the value of the piece and the prestige of the weaver and the wearer, making ideal criteria for imitation. This style of naturalistic flora and fauna is much admired and copied across Guatemala, but fine double-faced technique is not usually done well outside San Antonio. For example, compare the workmanship in 3850.167017 front and back (see Figs. 23 and 24) with the examples from Comalapa and Chichicastenango (Fig. 44).

II. The Fashion of *Traje*

Modern Dress and Indigenous Identity

Guatemala has two population groups, indigenous and *Ladino*. They may have the identical genetic background but profess strikingly different values. The indigenous Maya have in the past

seen themselves as members of their municipality, not their nation. They have traditionally practiced folk Catholicism, although evangelical Protestantism is now making great inroads. Living in more remote areas, the indigenous Maya have lacked education and have been limited to work as farmers, laborers, artisans, or small traders. If they speak Spanish, it is with outsiders, favoring their birth language among themselves. While the women almost always wear traditional dress, the men likely use it only for ceremonial or official occasions, if then. Rural women wearing *traje* will carry babies on their backs and their bundles on their heads (Fig. 45).

In contrast, *Ladinos* tend to be literate, better educated, and more integrated with the national economy, no longer seeing themselves primarily as Indians. *Ladinos* assume an attitude of superiority to the indigenous, and the indigenous may respond with deference or resentment. They speak Spanish as their first language, and both men and women wear Western dress. They may reject *traje* as a symbol of the poverty, illiteracy, and a life they left behind a generation ago. They practice orthodox Catholicism or evangelical Protestantism and may follow any profession.

There is a tremendous variety of costume among the indigenous highland Maya. Publications have described as many as 150 municipalities as having their own identifying style of dress. While many pressures are now blurring the boundaries of these dress styles, Maya women continue to use the *huipil*. The repetition of design forms in their dress and the celebration of the old ways are vital, reaffirming their membership in their communities and the strength and survival of themselves as a distinct people.

Traditional Markers

Many factors come into play in creating a regional style. From the wearer's apparel, one can deduce age, education, worldliness, financial and social standing, as well as the function—utilitarian or festive—of the occasion. Impulses toward change are counterbalanced by the intensity of conservative values and a strong sense of community identity and pride, expressed in traditional dress.

FUNCTION—Different functions require different styles of *huipil*. The everyday *huipil* may be made of completely plain, undecorated cloth for hard or dirty work. A serviceable but traditionally styled

everyday *huipil* from Comalapa has the town signature of the red shoulder bar and some simple brocade figures. A woman working at home or doing rough work (see Fig. 45) might also turn her *huipil* inside out to extend its life by protecting the face brocade floats from wear.

CEREMONY—Ceremonial styles, worn for festive occasions such as weddings or *cofradía* rituals, are likely to be made in more expensive and fragile materials and shapes that make any serious labor impossible. The ceremonial *huipil* is generally longer and worn over another *huipil*, frequently concealing the hands. The model from Quetzaltenango is woven in an open, lacey-looking plain weave and extravagantly brocaded in silk and cotton, from shoulder to midcalf. It was worn with the neck pulled up over the back of the head in the fashion of a veil. The ceremonial *huipil* in Comalapa is executed in expensive, handspun natural brown cotton and brocaded in silk as well as wool and cotton. The style here features tiny, ornamental armholes that the arms are not passed through; the *huipil* is worn as an armless sort of cape, with only the hands peeking out from the lower hem to carry ritual objects (see Figs. 15 and 40).

MOURNING—A special color combination of black and lilac is used to designate mourning, called *luto*. In San Pedro Sacatepéquez, this may also include green, according to Aguilar (Aguilar, 1983, p. 9). The unfinished trade piece 1820.188528 (see Fig. 30) in purple and black may be a mourning *huipil*. Several informants in Comalapa and other villages indicated that this color combination was representative in their locales as well.

WEALTH—Wealth and prestige are conveyed by the quality and type of fibers used in a weaving; by the amount, type, and quality of brocade and by the condition of wear of the garment. A profusion of brocade on a *huipil* represents a substantial investment in materials and in time and indicates the wearer to be comfortably well off. It would be interesting to know how much this increase in brocade is due to the availability of thread and how much to the change in women's work loads. Recent improvements in water supply, electric light, and the accessibility of corn mills on one hand would ease daily chores and allow for more fancy weaving. However, as family farms are divided between generations of heirs, they become too small to provide for a family's needs. Therefore, the increasing need for work outside the home by either men or women

would add to a woman's workload and might encourage the wearing of less time-consuming garments. Substituting commercially produced *huipiles* or western dress may sometimes be practical or necessary.

Silk was the primary indicator of wealth until World War II, when it became very difficult to obtain. Early *huipiles* in the Collection, such as the Chichicastenango series from the 1920s and 1930s, are brocaded in red or magenta silk. Rayon appears to have been used very little and sporadically. As O'Neale, who, apparently disliking the fiber, put it so charmingly, it is "gratifying to note, in 1936, how few inroads had been made by rayon yarns" (O'Neale, 1966, p. 19). Her opinion must have been shared by other collectors, for rayon is largely absent from *huipiles* in the Field Collection.

If a woman chooses not to dress in *traje*, the decision may be one of economic necessity. Ehlers estimated that a full outfit in *traje* would cost between \$50 and \$100 in 1977—*huipil*, *corte* (skirt), *faja* (sash), *camisón* (slip), *delantal* (apron), *perraje* (shawl with tassels), *listón* (hair ribbon), and *pañuelo* (napkin). This would last 10 years, if the woman had 2 or 3 to alternate. At the same time, a Western dress outfit cost Q20 (Quetzals) but would last only 4 months, or 10 times the cost of the *traje*. This works out to a daily usage of traditional clothes at Q0.08 versus Western clothes at Q0.74 per day. However, as Ehlers points out, those requiring traditional clothes would have to save almost 3 years at Q1 a day to buy such an outfit (Ehlers, 1990, pp. 117, 129). At this time, the Quetzal was worth one US dollar. Gordon (1993, p. 5) observes:

Although hand-woven clothing is much more cost effective than Western dress in the long run . . . it is expensive, and difficult for a poor person to procure. If every moment of a person's time must be devoted to income (or food)-producing activity (even weaving), it is nearly impossible to find the time to weave garments for personal use.

The poorest women may wear a *perraje huipil*, made of shawl fabric, to retain their standing in the community.

Recycling and patching extend a garment's life. The Collection contains two fascinating *huipiles* from Chichicastenango that have seen long, hard use. Originally, the *huipil* 3780.167746 (Fig. 46) was richly brocaded in the double-headed eagle pattern, using a wealth of scarlet silk. The brocaded sections have been cut off the original

ground and reattached to a new ground of flour sack, turned inside out, but with the lettering still quite visible, if that section were not to be tucked into the wearer's skirt. It is at—or even past—the stage of being cut up for little girls' *huipiles* or even for baby clothes. The *huipil* 3780.167745 (not shown) was brocaded in silk and wool in the flower pattern, but is now so worn that the ground threads show through the brocade, and there are multiple patches. Clearly, women had strong reasons to maintain and wear these faded remnants. Their dates and Chichicastenango provenance hint at stories of loss during the political violence of the 1980s.

AGE AND YOUTH—In Comalapa, the neck opening is indicative of a woman's age. In the 1990s, a simple slit neck was seen to be popular with older women, a squared neck (see Fig. 14) with mature women, a rounded neck with young women, and a V-neck with young girls (see Fig. 61). These styles are typical today and will doubtless change with the fashions of the next generation. A woman may want to show off a little like the girl in the market (Fig. 47), wearing a brand new *huipil* in the flowery diamond pattern tucked into her tightly wrapped skirt. In the same year in Nauhualá, teen-age girls were mixing their vocabulary of dress, ranging from shorts and T-shirt, to traditional long skirts with T-shirts, to a complete outfit of *traje* with skirt and *huipil* (Fig. 48).

SEXUALITY—In other museum collections, one finds older *huipiles* from Chichicastenango with a small coin or button in the center of the medallions or rosette appliqués. Later styles reduced this symbol to a small circle of embroidery. According to Rodas, these elements were fertility symbols. At this time, *huipiles* were traditionally woven by women but embroidered by men. A childless woman (for it is the woman who is blamed for childlessness) must wear a plain cloth *huipil* with no decorations (Rodas et al., 1940, pp. 122–123). The embroidery around the head opening in Chichicastenango is said to represent the sun, with long points of appliquéd fabric outlined in purple and orange. All the Chichicastenango *huipiles* in the Collection have this distinctive neck. However, according to Rodas et al., “Until she reaches the age of puberty, the girl . . . is not entitled to wear the embroidered sun and the four moons” (Rodas et al., 1940, p. 122). This is probably no longer the case. Two used *huipiles* bought by the author in the local market in 1994 feature the sun neck in very small sizes, and are apparently made for prepubescent girls.

Worldliness

In very remote villages or farmsteads, it may not occur to a woman that she has a choice of what to wear. If she is very poor, there may be no choice. However, in less isolated areas, options abound: *traje* or not, local or not, self-made or not, and backstrap-loomed or commercially made. For example, the treadle-loomed *huipil* 3967.191502 in Figure 41 is unmistakable in terms of the Quetzaltenango community look, with its three-panel construction, color combination of gold and purple, and horizontal bands of candelabra motifs. In 1995, this was the fashionable *huipil* worn by the majority of well-to-do indigenous women in the Quetzaltenango Palm Sunday processions (see Fig. 42). This same *huipil* was available in different color combinations, in markets in Chichicastenango, San Antonio Aguas Calientes, Antigua, and Santa María de Jesús, either ready-to-wear or to be trimmed as desired by the purchaser. It is produced commercially in Totonicapán.

A group of three informants, well-known women artists in Comalapa, wore *traje*, but only two wore backstrap *huipiles* in the style of Comalapa, with the red shoulder bar and rows of brocade figures (Fig. 49). The other wore a treadle-loomed *huipil* from Quetzaltenango. For this woman, the choice of the commercially-made *huipil* might indicate her connection with a world outside the local village, with its implications of backwardness, or her taste for a “new” style, or her preference for painting, not weaving. Her fashion choice expressed her tie to both the modern world and her indigenous community. In this way, the tradition of wearing a *huipil* may be preserved while incorporating a broader view of the world. It can span Guatemala and cut across ethnic boundaries. As Maya medical student Mirella Ixcot put it in “Between Light and Shadow: Maya Women in Transition” (video by Kathryn V. Lipke, Dakota Productions, Belvidere, Vermont, 1997), “I think that as Maya, if we occupy a public position, we must be identified as Maya before the world and with our own people.”

III. Components of Traditional *Huipiles*

The traditional *huipiles* of many highland Maya villages may still reveal their local origins. Across

the Highlands, there is a similar level of skill and vocabulary of motif, although elements can vary substantially due to local custom, individual skill, or preference. Differences are found in fiber, weave structure, length and width of garment, shape of neck opening, color, pattern and design motifs, embroidery, trims, and findings. What are the key components of the *huipil* in the communities studied, and how have these changed? What history lies behind these traditional and contemporary design choices?

Fibers

The primary fiber for all Maya textiles is cotton. Cotton (*algodón* in Spanish) has been used since prehistoric times. Warps and primary wefts are nearly always cotton. Supplementary wefts are usually cotton, and occasionally silk, wool, rayon, or acrylic.

Cotton thread was traditionally handspun using a spindle to draw out and twist the cleaned cotton fibers. The Maya spindle is a stick approximately 42 cm long, pointed on both ends, with a 4–5 cm ball 18 cm from the lower end (Fig. 50). In 1936, O'Neale found that, although every girl was still taught hand spinning, the practice was fast disappearing due to the increasing availability and decreasing price of commercial yarns. Some women would respin commercial yarn to strengthen it or ply together two commercial, single-ply yarns to give the appearance of handspun yarn.

Natural brown cotton, known as *ixcaco*, was traditionally used for both warp and weft for the Comalapa ceremonial *huipil* (see Fig. 18). This cotton was handspun because it has a very short fiber, not suitable for commercial spinning. Hand spinning now is very expensive and very rarely done, so a new ceremonial Comalapa *huipil* may likely be woven with, at the most, a few featured handspun *ixcaco* wefts and commercially spun brown-dyed cotton warps, or both warps and wefts of commercial brown cotton. Recently, the Museo Ixchel and Protege have sponsored a renaissance in production and marketing of not only natural brown but natural green and yellow cottons for the tourist or collector market. Some hand spinning is still seen in Santiago Atitlán, where it is done for tourists (Fig. 51).

In 1885, American entrepreneurs opened a factory in Cantel near Quetzaltenango, where, for the first time, thread was industrially produced in

Guatemala. More than 400 indigenous women and children were employed to work the power machinery that was "brought on the backs of Indians or mules" (Tisdell, 1910, p. 617). Dyed cotton thread was the most popular in the color purple (made to imitate the look of the costly shellfish dye "*purpura patula*") and brown, supplanting the handspun natural brown cotton. The smoother, more consistent machine-spun twist of these yarns is quite different and easily distinguished from that of the tightly handspun originals. However, the time saved from spinning, together with the availability of less expensive thread, allowed women to spend more time brocading their weavings, and the Field Collections demonstrate a rise in the amounts of brocade patterning over the decades.

There are many grades of commercial cotton. Single yarn is the cheapest; called *hilo* or *hilo flojo* (weak yarn), it must be twisted or plied to make it strong enough for warp (Fig. 52). Bleached yarn, *hilo chino* (Chinese yarn) is more expensive. *Hilo alemán* (German yarn) is "more expensive and hard to get, an imported yarn that is known for its colorfastness" (Sperlich & Sperlich, 1980, p. 8). Two-ply thread (under a brand name such as Mish or Río Blanco) has more luster and less shrinkage than the single ply and is used for both plain weaving and brocading. Three-ply Mish has the same characteristics as two-ply but is stronger. Mercerized cottons are valued for their sheen but are imported and expensive. Sedalina, a two-ply yarn from Colombia and other yarns from Spain, Mexico, and Eastern European countries are sold in small quantities and used for brocading. Recently, acrylic yarns have been popular for their bright colors, used as supplementary wefts, and less frequently for plain weave.

When sheep farming and wool production were introduced by the Spanish, women were trained to wash and card wool and men to operate the spinning wheel and the treadle loom. Possibly because of its association with the Conquest, wool is found infrequently in highland women's *huipiles* except as brocade or embroidery thread. It is not an indicator of wealth, but may be associated with location by climate. In some of the colder regions, wool is used as thick and elaborate embroidery. The red shoulder band on the Comalapa *huipil* is frequently brocaded in wool, as are 9 of the 11 in the Field Collection. Wool is used for some brocade in the *huipil* and in the fabric for the traditional man's suit in Chichicastenango and

elsewhere and for blankets made in Momostenango.

Silk is found in approximately half of the *huipiles* in the Collection, used primarily as an accent or as embroidery trim, but sometimes filling 100% of the brocade. As the price of silk rose during the years of World War II, weavers gradually shifted to the far cheaper cotton with its improved mercerized sheen. Rayon is little used except in the taffeta ribbons and appliqués found, for example, in Chichicastenango.

Dyes

Before the invention of aniline dyes in 1857, the natural dyes used included indigo, cochineal, Brazilwood, logwood, and the snail *púrpura patula*. Shades of blue and green were created with indigo. Lavender and purple were obtained for cottons by squeezing the ocean mollusk called *púrpura patula* onto the prepared cotton yarns. Cochineal, called “*grana*” or “*cochinilla*,” is a tiny insect that feeds on the prickly pear cactus. It was cultivated and ground to produce a beautiful range of reds, and additional, though fugitive, reds were made from Brazilwood and logwood. The red aniline dye locally known as “*rojo alemán*,” or German Red (whether or not it was actually German), soon made redundant the local cochineal industry. By the 1930s, the beautiful reds of cochineal dye were long gone. O’Neale found cochineal dye in only one workshop in 1936 (Schevill et al., 1991, p. 367), and Delgado found none in all of Guatemala in the 1950s.

The town of Salcajá is home to a special industry of space-dyeing or tie-dyeing threads for skirts and for *huipiles*. In this process, known locally as *jaspé* and more internationally as *ikat*, commercial thread, either white, natural, or colored, is tightly bound into patterns and over-dyed with black or dark blue. When untied, this leaves designs of human, animal, plant or geometric figures. Hanks are then sold to commercial weavers. Examples may be seen in the weft stripes of the *huipil* in Figure 41 and in the warp stripes of the shawls in Figures 29 and 42.

Shape

Shape is indicative of not only individual town styles but the event for which the *huipil* is worn.

Traditionally, all Maya *huipiles* were made of simple rectangles with only the number and size of panels, the shape of the neck opening, and the sewing or embroidery of seams for variation. Whether *huipiles* are of two or three panels, whether side seams may be sewn or left open and held in place by the belt and whether they are worn tucked into the skirt or worn loose is a matter dictated by the community, not an individual choice. In Cobán, *huipiles* are short, ending at the waist (see Fig. 8). Everyday *huipiles* elsewhere are usually about knee length, tucked into the skirt as a sort of petticoat. Three-panel *huipiles* are customary in Cobán, Chichicastenango, Quetzaltenango, and lately also in Comalapa, while two panels are the rule in San Pedro Sacatepéquez, Santa María de Jesús, and San Antonio Aguas Calientes. Most ceremonial *huipiles* are longer and are worn over the skirt.

Color

A *huipil*’s color may be the first clue to its origin, acting like a team uniform or a flag of pride. In this study, all the municipalities surveyed are linked with specific colors. In Comalapa, the *huipil* is brocaded with the broad red shoulder band called the *creya*. There is plenty of leeway for individualization, however. Some women choose to weave the *creya* in plain weave or to brocade it plainly or in a pattern, in wool or cheaper and brighter acrylic. While Comalapa weavers maintained this band in both everyday and ceremonial type, this study found that the older the *creya*, the wider it was.

A standardized color scheme is also found in Quetzaltenango, where colors of gold and purple are preferred. Although the seven *huipiles* from Quetzaltenango were collected by seven different people over the course of a century, all but one is colored purple and/or gold. The traditional lacey Cobán *huipil* was nearly always white brocaded on white, but now a wide selection of color is available. San Pedro Sacatepéquez *huipiles* have historically been white with red and purple brocading. Brocade in the older Chichicastenango *huipiles* tended to red or magenta on a white or natural brown ground and now feature multichromatic brocade on a variety of backgrounds. The San Antonio Aguas Calientes *huipil* is splendid in multicolored floral brocade on a spectrum of solid color grounds. Santa María de Jesús has a preferred color combination for each of its many

styles: the *cofradía huipiles* in red and white; the *piecha* in bright blue, green, purple, and pink; and the quetzal bird in emerald green with multicolor surrounding figures.

Pattern and Design Motifs

Abstract geometric patterns are used everywhere but are especially popular in San Antonio Aguas Calientes. According to one master weaver informant, these include the dot (*punto*); groups of dots (*pié de chucho*); the wing-like V sideways (*ala*); the Y sideways (*palitos*); comb (*peine*); and flag-like chevrons, waves, and zigzags in many forms (*bandera*). Delgado's extensive fieldwork on designs and motifs in 1957 attributes no special meanings to these motifs (Delgado & de Schmidt, 1963).

Some forms are ancient, found in archeological artifacts, like the two-headed eagle called *kot* and the double-ended serpent. However, with artistic license, other creatures can take on whimsical quantities of legs and tails to create the desired rhythm and pattern. The figures of men and women that appear in *huipiles* from Cobán are called *muñecos* (dolls), and are shown standing, waving, and on horseback (see Figs. 11 and 12).

The tree of life is common to many cultures, ranging across Scandinavia, colonial-era Spain and Italy, and the Islamic Middle East. It is a principal design element in San Pedro Sacatepéquez on *cofradía huipiles*, with a corn plant or tree of life rising from a vase (Arriola de Geng, 1991, p. 119) (see Figs. 32 and 33). The tree of life also occurs in various forms in Cobán (see Figs. 9 and 10) and Quetzaltenango (see Fig. 39). Other inspiration is drawn from daily life, such as corn plants, flowers, and the pine tree or from the pattern books available in the market. *Huipiles* in the Collection show a gradually increasing amount of brocading over the years. Figures have generally become larger, and small geometric motifs are frequently added to fill the upper portion of the *huipil*.

Symbolism

Whether or not individual design motifs have meaning is a matter of debate. According to Delgado, "nowhere were certain designs admitted to have special symbolisms [sic] or restricted us-

age." Designs are "*del pueblo*" (from the town) and are used "*por gusto*" (according to taste) (Delgado & de Schmidt, 1963, p. 115). Informants in this study too knew local names for design elements and said that they used them simply as design elements. Knoke de Arathoon's study of 40 weavers found few who ascribed symbolic meaning to design motifs. Among those who did, it is possible that some weavers attached stories to their weavings in order to make them more appealing to tourists—or to anthropologists (Knoke de Arathoon, 2005, p. 23). Zigzags could represent serpents or thorns in Santa María de Jesús or the ups and downs of a woman's life in Teepán. With slight variations, a flowery diamond shape could be the *centro del pueblo* in Santa María de Jesús, a *rupan plato* ritual offering in Comalapa, or a simple, repeated geometric form. A horizontal stripe might mean a cornfield furrow in Chichicastenango or merely a colorful band to fill space or to separate rows of more complex figures.

However, some specific meanings are suggested by Olga Arriola de Geng (1991, p. 120). When used with a horn or fountain, the dove and the little bird mean life; used with the cross, the same fountain signifies a Christian state of grace or a place for the soul to drink. The eagle, king of birds, represents force and valor. Schevill discusses the question of forced usage by the Spanish of the double-headed eagle motif, significant immediately after the Conquest under Charles V as the symbol of the Hapsburg Empire. The Maya word *kot* however "suggests that [the image] predates the Conquest" (Schevill, 1985, p. 22).

Gordon (1993, p. 23) describes the symbolism in Chichicastenango ceremonial *huipiles* illustrated in Figures 3 and 4:

Almost every element of this type of *huipil* has symbolic meaning. The whole configuration represents the world, and the head comes from it like the sun. Its rays are embroidered in silk ribbon. The black rosettes represent the four cardinal points, stripes represent [the furrows in] cornfields, the diaper pattern represents corn kernels, and the zigzags are variously referred to as mountains and eagle wings and claws. The two-headed eagle was [perhaps] adapted from European textiles, but had important local meaning. It is explained as the dualistic force; as one head looking to heaven and one to earth or as the conflict between European and Mayan beliefs. The Kiché [sic] Maya were known as 'sons of the eagle.'

The Cobán area has not forgotten the old legends behind certain patterns. The woven motifs

were generally closely associated with ancient stories or myths; in fact, two observers (Alonso, 1970; Dieseldorff, 1984) refer to these textiles as “one of the last codices” of Maya beliefs. Many images illustrate a complex pre-Columbian legend featuring the sun and the moon. In the “*reenc*” style in *huipil* 3312.288124 (Fig. 53), the gauze ground has crossed warp threads. A pattern of thicker threads meandering back and forth warp-wise, is “possibly a variation of an abstract style that ideographically represents the moon as weaver” (Gordon, 1993, p. 30).

Also according to Gordon, the motifs in Cobán *huipiles* 3312.288124 (see Fig. 53) and 3266.243980 (Fig. 54) may have been drawn from a legend of the Sun and Moon. The Moon tricked her father, the Sun, who then turned himself into a hummingbird that made its way into her heart. When still in his human form, the Sun had been out hunting deer, and this animal also came to stand for him. The figure on horseback originally symbolized a messenger between the human and spiritual worlds. The small figures are “sun-eyes” (Gordon, 1993, p. 30).

Taken as a whole, however, a woman dressed in traditional textiles is herself one big symbol. In her, the elements of color, form, and material combine to communicate ethnic identity. “*Así pues, los símbolos textiles son destellos de la memoria colectiva maya, caudal de riqueza intangible. Están entretejidos con el importante y fuerte papel de la cofradía como reservorio de esta identidad simbólica, sobre todo en el marco de la religión, la mitología ya la acción ritual*” (Knoke de Arathoon, 2005, p. 23). In translation, textile symbols are flashes from the collective Maya memory, a wealth of intangible richness. They are interwoven with the strong and important role of the *cofradía* as a reservoir of this symbolic identity, above all in the context of religion, mythology, and ritual action.

IV. Technology and Contemporary Markets

Backstrap Loom Weaving

The indigenous backstrap loom is a wonderfully portable thing, an arrangement of simple sticks holding the warp threads in tension between a belt around the weaver’s back and any handy post or tree. Most of the sticks can be made from found

wood with a little finishing and smoothing. Only the weaver’s sword, inserted to part the two layers of the web, requires much shaping. The whole thing can be easily rolled up into a small parcel not over 70 cm wide and 12–15 cm in diameter, including the cloth in work (Fig. 55).

As the weaver leans back and forward, tension on the threads is increased and released, changing the shed opening with pressure of the sword on the warps. To create a garment, pieces of cloth are usually woven to the desired size, and a piece may have four selvages (woven, uncut edges), or panels may be cut from one length. A width of 66 cm and a length of 3.5 m seem to be the maximum. The backstrap loom is most efficient at 12–15 cm wide, a comfortable arm’s reach; each centimeter after that adds effort and time. Fisher (1984, p. 6) provides a succinct explanation of back-strap weaving:

The loom itself is an ingenious machine made of a group of sticks upon which a lengthwise set of threads, the warp, is arranged. The warp is made by wrapping the threads in a figure eight manner on a simple frame called a warping board. When the loom is ready for weaving, one end is tied to a post or tree and the other is attached to the weaver, using a backstrap. A system of smaller sticks and pattern weaving heddles (rods tied with thread loops that encircle individual warps) gives the weaver full control of the warp. Using heddles and a flat smooth stick, the sword or batten, sheds are opened so that the weft, or crosswise yarn, can be interlaced with the warp.

Types of Weave

In the Highlands, ground cloth is usually weft-faced plain weave, basket weave, or, more rarely, twill weave. Any of these may be stripes, plaids, or solid colors. Variety in spacing of warp, weft, or both can be produced by several methods. One is by beating wefts down tightly to produce weft-faced fabrics; most highland cloth is weft-faced. Another is cording, or bundling together more weft threads than in the surrounding ground (see Fig. 5). Cording is sometimes introduced as a contrasting woven texture. More often it is found at the ends of a woven panel where there is little room to maneuver a shuttle or sword and it becomes very difficult to weave. A third method is by setting warps close together or doubling warps to produce more warp-faced cloth.

The exception to the highland plain weave is the gauze weave characteristic of Cobán, which is done by crossing the warps, either singly or in

pairs, and securing the crosses by the passage of the weft through them. This can be done by tying up the warps on the loom to manipulate all at once, or, laboriously, one by one, by hand. Simple gauze weave alternating with bands of plain weave as illustrated in Figure 12 may be known as *leno* (de Jongh Osborne, 1975, p. 78).

Brocade Terminology

The brocade patterns in the *huipiles* in this study are produced during weaving, while the textile is still under construction on the loom. The structure of the fabric consists of the tensioned, fixed, lengthwise warps (*urdimbre*) and the alterable, horizontal wefts (*trama*), where the action occurs. On the background of this plainer fabric, nonstructural, supplementary wefts can be introduced to create figures in additional colors, materials and textures. Supplementary wefts can be continuous (producing a pattern running from edge to edge of the textile) or discontinuous (occurring only in local areas). In either case, the figures on the face of the fabric executed in the supplementary wefts are said to “float” over a certain number of warps (Emery, 1995, p. 141).

Since at least the mid 1930s, pattern sticks have been used in the backstrap loom to facilitate the tedious thread counting required by repeating designs. The weaver typically ties the warps of a certain interval to an extra heddle. Tying up every fourth odd-numbered warp will generate a longer float (1-7-13-19) than every other odd warp (1-5-9-13). Using more pattern sticks can make a backstrap into a virtual four-harness loom, while producing a ribbed effect, by vertically or diagonally aligning the tie-down warps. Work done without pattern sticks may have a variable or less visible alignment of tie-down warps.

There are three ways in which brocade threads may be woven so as to be visible on one or two sides of the cloth. In single-faced brocade, the pattern is visible on one side only (see Fig. 3). O’Neale and some others refer to this as onlay, inlay, or laid-in brocade (O’Neale, 1966, p. 59). Brocade threads are added while the shed is open, so that they pass over only one set of warps. When the shed closes, the threads are invisible from the back. This method requires less thread than double-face brocade and thus the fabric is lighter and more economical to make. Both sin-

gle-face and double-face brocade can be seen in the *huipil* 2401.190085 (Figs. 56 and 57).

Current thinking draws a distinction between double-faced brocade and two-faced brocade, while O’Neale and Osborne did not (O’Neale, 1966, p. 61). The pattern in double-faced brocade (*marcador*) is the same on both front and back. With the shed closed and thus both sets of warp threads together, the brocade threads in the desired pattern are entered, the ground thread is beaten in, and the shed is changed. Duplicate pattern brocade threads are then entered from the other side, and the process is repeated, producing a cleanly defined pattern identical on both sides (see Figs. 23 and 56). These are the heaviest and the most expensive textiles because they require the use of the most yarn.

In two-faced brocade called *medio-marcador* (half-*marcador*), the pattern is reversed on the back face of the textile. Brocade threads are added with the shed closed so that they go through both sets of warps, in this example, *huipil* 2393.190048 (Figs. 58 and 59). Unlike double-faced brocade, the brocade threads do not duplicate the pattern: the supplementary weft thread proceeds once in the direction of weaving only. The brocade threads float on the back of the cloth and are brought to the front face of the textile only when the weaver desires to show the pattern there.

Tapestry weave is not used on *huipiles*. It is used on indigenous hair ribbons and belts as well as the placemats and table runners produced for the tourist market (Figs. 60 and 61). Tapestry weave is done on backstrap or floor looms with discontinuous wefts, which turn back to produce patterns of solid color alone, with no continuous weft or background structure. This produces a small slit or opening between the colors of different figures.

Embroidery, Trims, and Findings

Whether it involves brocade or tapestry work, weaving inevitably generates angular designs produced by diagonal lines. The finest threads, densely woven, may soften this angularity only incrementally. Embroidery in contrast is free to produce curved and rounded shapes and lines (see Figs. 10 and 28). It has been used in most communities to join the *huipil* panels in the decorative seam called the *randa*, to bind the neck or armholes, and to personalize bought cloth.

Randas on early everyday *huipiles* from Quetz-

altenango were made in straight, multicolor buttonhole stitch on the everyday *huipiles*. On the ceremonial *huipil* 2393.190013 (see Fig. 39), we find extensive patterns of flowers and leaves. On both everyday and festive *huipiles*, the neck opening is also decorated with embroidery. An appliquéd neck trim could always be added to freshen up an old *huipil*. Thus, the style of neck trim may provide little insight as to date, because it could be frequently changed as required by wear or to fashion.

The neck detail traditional in San Pedro Sacatepéquez may be described as a collar of points or triangles of trellis backstitch or punch stitch surrounding the bound neck (Figs. 62 and 63). The points sometimes terminated in crosses and were usually embroidered in highly twisted threads dyed in real or mock-shellfish purple. These are called *pachak* in Kaqchiquel, and are no longer commonly made (Arriola de Geng, 1991, p. 13).

Like those of Quetzaltenango, the *huipiles* of Chichicastenango require the seams, particularly in the brocaded *pecho* or breast areas, to be joined with or covered by embroidery. This was traditionally hand done by men in chain stitch and buttonhole stitch. "After the woman has finished weaving the cloth, she gives it to the man who sews the strips together, hems it, and if it is a *huipil*, cuts out and embroiders the neck. Not all men are able to embroider, but most can" (Bunzel, 1959, p. 61). Recently, machine embroidery has become an art in its own right in Quetzaltenango (see Fig. 41).

The white *huipiles* of Cobán in the 60s were trimmed with a cornucopia of flower embroidery at neck and arms. This embroidery may be worked directly on the *huipil*, or ready-made neck trims may be purchased in the marketplace. The quetzal wedding *huipil* of Santa María de Jesús is exuberantly embroidered, emblazoned with a pair of quetzal birds and masses of flowers. Other communities, for example, San Cristobal Totonicapán, Patzún, Huehuetenango, and San Mateo Ixtatán, traditionally embroidered the yoke of the *huipil*.

Appliqué

Certain trims and findings are popular across broad regions and some have been in vogue for many years. For instance, the 18th century Austrian style floral brocaded ribbons noted by

O'Neale (1966, p. 23) remain popular today. The dark blue and black taffeta ribbons used for rosettes in Chichicastenango (see Fig. 4) were noted by Eisen in 1902 (Schevill, 1993), and the sun neck and medallions are still cut from commercial cloth and sewn to the *huipil* as appliqués. Trade cloth, velvet, and ribbon came to be used to protect arm and neck openings and buttons or coins were sometimes placed in the center of Chichicastenango rosettes. Embroidered neck trims may be purchased ready-made or to order in the market, and there is a resale market for used neck embroidery trims as well. Other current trims include zippers, metallic thread, commercial lace (see Fig. 10) and crocheted lace. Neck and arm trims of ribbon, velvet, or other commercial cloth are applied to the *huipiles* of Comalapa and San Antonio Aguas Calientes, and are often removed before sale to collectors.

Floor-Loom Weaving

As mentioned earlier, the technologies of the floor loom and the spinning wheel were unknown before the Spanish Conquest, when sheep were introduced, men were trained to operate the spinning wheel and the treadle loom, and women to wash and card wool. By 1750, indigenous men were being apprenticed to Spanish master weavers, and European floor or treadle loom weaving became widespread. Until the 1940s and 1950s, most commercial weaving was done by men, and women used only the backstrap loom. Lately, the development of piecework has begun to appeal to women as small entrepreneurs, who have become adept at the treadle loom. Their output can satisfy either market needs for the regional style *huipiles* or products for the tourist market (Fig. 64).

The floor or foot loom is a fixed framework that holds the warp thread in tension between two beams. The loom may be warped once for much greater lengths and widths of cloth than is possible on the backstrap loom. Treadles lift the warp mechanically. On a draw loom (a treadle loom with additional heddles), patterns may be set up once and then repeated endlessly. The draw loom is usually operated by a seated weaver with a standing assistant to pull up or "draw" the sets of heddles that are arranged to create the patterns (Fig. 65). *Huipiles* produced on these commercial looms are much faster to make and accordingly cheaper than the labor-intensive backstrap-loomed originals.

Once machine-spun yarn became easily available, commercially woven *huipiles* were also produced and distributed for sale by traveling merchants. These *huipiles*, woven on four-harness treadle looms, came from the big weaving centers of Quetzaltenango, Totonicapán, San Pedro Sacatepéquez, and San Martín Jilotepeque. Simple, mainly geometric patterns were made for general appeal with brocaded centers done partly by treading and partly by hand. Sometimes more regionally specific design motifs were used, including standardized bands of birds, animals, human figures, geometric figures, and plants. The floor-loomed *huipil* 162.188862 (see Fig. 35) has motifs of pine trees, ducks, turkeys, chickens, corn, the flowering plant, and the tree of life.

Contemporary Markets

The growth of tourism has had many varied effects. One is that weavers are exposed to new ideas, new materials, and new markets. Another is that these fresh inspirations will undoubtedly influence traditional styles. The marketplace offers a selection of tourist souvenirs in varying degrees of quality, from potholders to valuable antique *huipiles*, and some worry that the low standards of the typical tourist will erode the weaving traditions. However, first and foremost, the weavers need to earn a living. Market vendors find that wearing “picturesque” *traje* or offering craft demonstrations attracts customers (see Fig. 51); others selling to fellow Maya will wear fine quality *huipiles* to advertise their merchandise. Others offer lessons in backstrap weaving to tourists.

During the 30-year civil war, poor women widowed by the violence were forced to sell what little they had to feed their families. A famous tale is told of an American woman living in Antigua, Vey Smithers, during the 1970s. She was approached by poor indigenous women trying to sell their *huipiles*. As the story goes, Smithers told the women, “If you sell me your *huipil* today, you will have money for food today, but next month you will have no money, no food, and no *huipil*.” She began to supply the women with thread, and created Colibrí, one of the first organizations to assist indigenous women with product development and marketing, providing work and sustenance.

V. Women’s Traditional Roles and Current Trends

Home and Village

A brief description of daily life and women’s roles can provide insight into the Maya culture. Houses in small towns are likely to be of cement block, adobe, or stucco, painted white, and may have several rooms with wood or tile floors, and tile or sheet-metal roofs (Fig. 66). Those on the main streets may enjoy basic electricity and running water. Furnishings may include wooden chairs, tables, beds, and simple cabinets or chests. In towns, recent community improvements may bring running water to a shared neighborhood standpipe. Proximity to a corn mill can spare a woman from hours of hand grinding corn for the family’s staple tortillas.

In rural areas, homes may be isolated homesteads or located in *aldeas* (tiny hamlets). These are usually one-room buildings, with packed earth floors and thatch or wooden shingle roofs, frequently without electricity. Cooking is done on a hearth with three stones to support a griddle or pot. Smoke rises through the family’s stores of corn in the rafters and permeates the dwelling, helping to keep pests at bay. Garments may be stored on a clothesline indoors. Furnishings may include a few small wooden chairs or stools and a bed built out from a corner of the wall.

In general, women’s work in the rural Highlands still depends on preindustrial technology. Typical tasks involve making the early morning fire and preparing a breakfast of coffee, tortillas, beans, and maybe cheese or eggs; caring for children; caring for smaller animals; grinding corn; fetching water; hand-washing and mending the family’s clothes; tending a garden plot; and helping collect firewood. Whenever time permits, a woman can work on craft articles, such as woven, knitted, or crocheted goods for the tourist or the indigenous market.

Women’s Roles

As discussed, *traje* is the dominant dress in the more remote and traditional villages, where people may have little interaction with the outside world. But even in communities more integrated with contemporary Guatemala, a preference for traditional dress is due to more than poverty or ignorance of new styles. A woman not wearing

traje is more of a “free agent,” not subject to the full force of the traditional ways of her village. Barry (1992, p. 219) suggests male control of female apparel:

It is common for Indian men to adopt *Ladino* lifestyles . . . while insisting that their daughters and wives maintain the traditional culture and all its personal manifestations. The same is true for most Maya nationalists, who look on with horror as Indian women cut their hair or wear lipstick, but who are not in the least bit critical of men who have by their appearance completely crossed over to *Ladino* styles.

As elsewhere in the world, religious faith, sexuality, political security, economic realities, and fashion choices all influence a women's dress. Smith (1995, p. 730) postulates that, during the Conquest and the colonial period, both Spanish and indigenous women “became key icons around which a modern nation or culture would be built in cultural, biological, and material terms. And reproductive control over women—i.e. because of their sexuality—became the instrumental means by which economic, political, and cultural dominance of the elite in a new nation was assured.” Maya women were protected by the community as bearers of future generations, as long as they maintained traditional behavior and local dress.

In contrast with this point of view is the recent pan-Maya movement, in which dress may be both aesthetic and/or political. “Indian unity” is a new theme in Guatemalan dress, and although it is still the great exception (affecting about 5% of the indigenous population) rather than the rule, it is a significant trend. Not surprisingly, it is often younger, better educated, urban individuals who choose to proclaim a generalized “Indian” identity through cross-community borrowing. They “show their worldliness” by incorporating others’ stylistic elements into their own *huipiles*, which they wear as an expression of pride in their greater ethnicity (Hendrickson, 1991; Gordon, 1993, p. 6). At the Chichicastenango market (Fig. 67), Maya women could choose from a selection of *huipil* panels to mix and match and trim as desired.

One young, indigenous informant from San Juan Sacatepéquez said she had been raised by her mother to wear the local *traje* but preferred the *huipil* of Cobán because it was more “elegant.” This woman worked in the textile museum, Museo Ixchel in Guatemala City, where she must have seen thousands of *huipiles* from all regions

and periods. It was also likely that her job required her to wear traditional dress. In another example, at the Behrhorst Clinic in the big *Ladino* town of Chimaltenango, virtually all the female staff, except those in lab coats, were wearing indigenous dress in 2004.

The *Cofradía*

During the centuries of isolation in the Highlands, villagers had become accustomed to some degree of self-government through the *cofradías*. These are local civil religious brotherhoods rooted in 15th-century Spanish guilds that have come to include powerful indigenous elements. In the *cofradías*, individuals may achieve status by community service in the local church or municipal governments, which are still often intertwined.

Although women do not directly wield political power in the *cofradías*, they exert influence through their husbands. Men must be married in order to hold *cofrade* office; wives are required to make the men's ceremonial garments and supply the clothes for the figures of the saints (see Fig. 31). In order to celebrate the holy days, certain rituals must be maintained, with all participants dressed in the approved style of that municipality (see ceremonial *huipiles* in Figs. 4, 15, 16, 18, 19, 26, 28, 32, 33, 39, and 40).

Women's power, in the sense of traditional hierarchy and status, is concentrated in the oldest women, who enforce their authority on adult and young women and on outsiders. One informant, a young Peace Corps volunteer living for 2 years in Nebaj, recounted that, after 6 months of service in the community, she came to greatly admire the beautiful *huipil* of one of her contacts. She commissioned one like it, and when it was finished, wore it to a wedding celebration. Older women interrogated her as to what right she had to wear this style of *huipil*, believing that a *huipil* with so many figures and colors was only earned after years of community service. This was apparently seen as the equivalent of wearing someone else's battle medals of honor. Wisely, the Peace Corps worker never again wore this *huipil* in Guatemala.

Acción Católica, or Catholic Action, founded in the 1930s, was intended to purge the Catholic church in the Highlands of the syncretic folk Catholicism that had flourished during the years of isolation. During the 1950s and 1960s, the *cofradías* and the indigenous communal groups they represented came to be seen as dangerous com-

munist forces. Under the 1982 Ríos Montt government, both Catholic and Protestant evangelical groups were encouraged to proselytize in the Highlands. The power of local traditional governments was taken away from the *cofradías* and given to *Ladinos* and secular politicians, at once eroding the base of the *cofradías* and removing incentives for membership in them (Barry, 1992, pp. 187–192, 197–198).

While members of the *cofradías* still give offerings to maintain and decorate the church, dress and venerate the saints, and celebrate special holy days, for many reasons, ceremonial *cofradía traje* is less visible than in the past. The power of the *cofradías* may have been so weakened by government actions or evangelical missionaries as to make it unsustainable, the members converting to an evangelical or progressive church. For economic reasons, members may have had to sell their *traje* or members of the *cofradías* may have died and been buried in their best *traje*. The members may have changed their *traje* for the sake of fashion, into something more attention getting and less traditional. The *cofradía* itself may have transformed into a brotherhood wearing Western rather than traditional dress (Arriola de Geng, 1991, p. 42). In Quetzaltenango during Holy Week in 1995 (see Fig. 42), indigenous women wore a fresh-looking, everyday *huipil* in the Palm Sunday processions. In the *Ladino* town of Antigua the same year (Fig. 68), no *huipiles* were worn. However, the women, wearing Western dresses and suits, performed the same traditional ritual of carrying saints' processions through the streets.

Economic Pressures

Historically, the family farm, called the *milpa*, was planted in corn, beans, and squash, and the cultivation of corn was celebrated with great ritual. As the population increased, the *milpa* was divided by inheritance into smaller and smaller plots, which became insufficient to support a family. Survival now usually requires work away from the home village, as seasonal farm workers, day laborers, or domestics, or in the production of arts and crafts.

During the early 19th century, Guatemala had great success in raising cash crops of cochineal and indigo, and became a major world supplier of cochineal. This came to an end in the 1860s with the invention and fast distribution of synthetic

dyes. The loss of this revenue precipitated a shift to coffee production, with drastic consequences for the previously isolated highland Maya, who occupied these now desirable lands. Since the 1880s, large numbers of indigenous people were made to work on the very coffee plantations to which they had lost their communal land (Barry, 1992, p. 105).

The economic development of the Highlands continued, with the eventual construction of better road and railroad systems. Eventually, cheaper and faster village-to-village communication improved, to some extent, the economic health of the villages, while exposing them to the influences of 20th century life and other styles of dress. Paved two-lane roads now connect the capital to Quetzaltenango, San Pedro Sacatepéquez, Chichicastenango, Cobán, San Antonio Aguas Calientes, and Comalapa, but as of 1996, Santa María de Jesús was linked only by rough dirt roads.

Changes are occurring at an accelerating rate. Villages are buffeted by migration, the failure of subsistence farming, the growth of tourism and cottage industries, and technological advances. Museum collections, such as the Field Museum's, offer a window into the complexities spurring cultural change and choice of dress.

Political Security

Political violence, instability, and insecurity offer sound reasons to abandon traditional dress. In 1954, the United States CIA sponsored an "anti-Communist" coup against the democratically elected government of Arbenz. For the next 36 years, violence affected much of the country. In 1982, the Guatemalan Conference of Catholic Bishops estimated that 1 million (mostly indigenous) people were displaced by the turmoil. Twenty percent of the entire population lost their homes. It is estimated that 100,000 women were widowed by the violence (Nyrop, 1983, pp. 43–46). BBC News and most Western news sources surmised that more than 200,000 people were killed or disappeared. The greatest violence took place in Ixil and Quiché (including Chichicastenango); people from those municipalities were made obvious targets by their distinctive clothing.

In the village church of Cotzal, crosses were placed honoring those lost in the violence of the years between 1972 and 1996 (Fig. 69). The currency of the Quetzal was devalued by half, indigenous villages depopulated, young men pressed

into the army, and people forcibly resettled into nontraditional "model" villages designed to destroy traditional values by mixing up ethnic and family groups in land remote from their homes.

By the late 1980s, the level of violence had declined sufficiently for some tourist travel to resume. The army declared a self-amnesty and permitted the election of President Arévalo, who ran on a progressive platform. While kidnappings and massacres continued, in general, the violence declined. In 1992, the Year of Indigenous People, Rigoberta Menchú, wearing traditional dress, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, and peace talks began. Although the Peace Accords were signed in 1996, the effectiveness of the peace remains to be seen.

During their years as refugees from the violence, thousands of people accustomed to a secluded village life were forced to adapt to new surroundings, intense political pressures, and a hard life on the road, hiding in the forests or living in refugee camps. For years, many were unable to wear traditional dress. While retaining a loyalty to traditional values, women who underwent such trauma might feel that a return to strict, old-fashioned *traje* would no longer be appropriate.

Traje has been used recently for pointed political statements. Gordon (1993, p. 5) describes a scene during protests in 1992 against the firing of indigenous workers on coastal plantations.

... individuals put on their best, ceremonial *traje*—"flying Indian colors" as a sign of solidarity. Many of the people who marched across the Pan American Highway on "the Return" from Mexico in January were also flying their colors. Those who had been able to save their *traje* took the garments out of storage and put them on once again.

VI. Fashioning Tradition

There is nothing simple about a woman's choice to preserve or relinquish traditional dress. As we have seen, women may be influenced by many factors other than personal choice: social, cultural, religious, economic, technological, and political forces all come to bear on fashion. Women in very remote, traditional villages may have no option but to make their own garments. Protection, prestige, and participation in village life or membership in a traditional *cofradía* may require conformity to a sanctioned dress code.

Women in the city may not find it socially acceptable to wear any type of indigenous dress, while women and men fleeing from politically dangerous situations may not find it safe to wear the distinctive dress of their particular village.

The process of assimilation and acculturation has been spurred on by the penetration of traditional societies by economic, religious, cultural, political, and military influences. Thus, while a decision to adopt *Ladino* styles or to drop traditional customs and dress may be personal, the choice occurs in an oppressive environment where indigenous ways are disparaged. When an Indian man or woman decides, for example, not to wear *traje* to avoid attracting military attention or to improve his or her chances for landing a job, the choice is hardly a free one (Barry, 1992, p. 219).

Anthropologists, textile scholars, and tourists debate the future of traditional Maya dress. Asturias de Barrios has predicted the demise of the Santa María de Jesús *sobrehuipil*. "When the old women who use it today die, it will disappear from the feminine wardrobe, but it could possibly survive in the *cofradías*" (Asturias de Barrios 1985, p. 80). Sweaters have already replaced the shawl for everyday usage, as the shawl replaced the *sobrehuipil* in the Quetzaltenango Easter procession. This study concludes without such a prediction, but instead with the belief that a style of dress so constant for so long must have roots deep within a community's traditional needs. One need look no further than a typical Good Friday procession, where a Maya woman in complete *traje* waits for the patron saints of her village to be carried past (Fig. 70). Economic and social forces will continue to color all the choices women make in their daily lives. With stability and security, the Maya may long maintain the symbols that represent their culture.

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Appendix 1. Descriptions of Figures

All photographs are by J. Claire Odland unless otherwise credited.

FIG. 1. The terrain around Nebaj and Chichicastenango in the Cuchumatanes mountains, Nebaj, 1997.

FIG. 2. Linguistic areas of Guatemala, drawn by Huong Ngo, compiled by Odland from Francisco Marroquín Linguistic Project, 1986 (Asturias de Barrios, 1991, p. 125) and data from Ethnologue: Languages of the World, 14th edition, <http://www.ethnologue.com>.

FIG. 3. This three-panel *huipil*, 2393.190005, from Chichicastenango is backstrap-loomed in natural white cotton, brocaded on one face in purple silk with gold accents. Both the "sun" detail around the neck and the medallions on the shoulders are hand-stitched appliqué of black taffeta, outlined in braided silk floss in purple and gold, hand stitched. The three panels and the side seams are hand sewn in black zigzags. Field Museum record: "Huipil Background white; design black stitching on the seams, cerise panel front and back and on shoulders, schematic birds, and geometrical designs; colors cerise and accents of orange. Black circles and projections around the neck." Collected by Florence D. Bartlett, 1935. 89 × 67 cm.

FIG. 4. The three-panel ceremonial *huipil* 1935.189256 from Chichicastenango is backstrap-loomed in handspun natural brown cotton, with single-face brocade in red cotton and multicolor silk accents, in a looped pile. Panels are hand sewn in zigzags. Figures include double-headed eagles center front and back, with smaller ones on each side panel. The eagle designs are bordered by tree of life figures at the sides, and small snakes border the brocade areas at top and bottom. The center and shoulder medallions and pointed "sun" neck trimmings in appliqué of black taffeta are outlined in purple and orange chain stitch. Field Museum record: "Ceremonial *huipil*. Brown cotton. Down front and across shoulders overlaid with embroidered red design forming cross with spots of purple, orange, and green silk. Four satin rosettes at base of each arm of cross. Star-shaped satin rays around neck." Collected in 1931. 98 (folded) × 160 cm.

FIG. 5. The *huipil* 3967.191499 was made for a little girl in three panels. The center seams on the area of plain ground are whipstitched in burgundy mercerized cotton and the sides machine sewn. The brocade pattern of multicolor natural-

istic flowers and leaves fills much of the faded dark-brown ground. Typical of Chichicastenango, the center panel is deeper than sides, and has vertical half-circle brocade borders in addition to the multicolor *randas* embroidered in buttonhole stitch. The vertical border pattern at the armholes is brocaded rainbow stripes. The round neck has an extra slit at the side, and is bound in plain black cloth, turned and machine stitched, as are the black cloth appliqué points of the "sun" pattern that are outlined in dark brown and red twisted cord, also machine stitched. The last 5 cm of the ground is woven with bundled wefts. Used, well worn, and frayed. Purchased by author in 1996 in Chichicastenango market, from local girls. 61 (folded) × 67.5 cm.

FIG. 6. A three-panel *huipil* from Chichicastenango, 4164.28 is backstrap-loomed, with a ground of white cotton. The brocade figures of modernistic flowers are executed in purple silk with red, yellow, and green and geometric figures along the seams. The panels are hand seamed at center and sides, and the black satin pointed appliqué neck trim and shoulder medallions are outlined in chain stitch. Collected in 1989 and donated by Tony and Kay Marks. 76 (folded) × 81 cm.

FIG. 7. The local produce market in Chichicastenango shows nearly all women wearing *huipiles*, some with sweaters or shawls, while men wear western style shirts. 1995.

FIG. 8. Market women in the Cobán, Alta Verapáz, food market wear the local three-panel *huipil* made of various synthetic commercial fabrics, loose over a slip or camisole. 2005.

FIG. 9. Collected in 1927 and probably made in Cobán, Alta Verapáz, the backstrap-loomed *huipil* 1741.103709 is made of cotton in three panels, of four woven selvages each. The panels are hand joined without embroidery. In the center, on a lightweight red background of plain weave, raised pile brocade creates a lattice of white hexagonal openings framing star-flowers of greenish-gold, purple, and blue. On the sides, on a lightweight white ground, raised white weft stripes alternate with brocaded red, green, and gold, corn plants, diamonds, flowery diamonds, and geometric forms. The neck opening is simply cut and turned, and the arm openings brocaded in green zigzags. Field Museum record: "So-called '*huipil*' 3 section blouse. Center red collar with white "lace" work in collar leaving diamonds shaped . . . with geometrical designs in green, gold & purple. Arm sections. White background with plant, bird & geometrical designs in red, green & oc-

casional gold & purple. Imported dyes from Germany. Purchased in Aguate, British Honduras, whither they are brought by Indians from Cobán." 48 (folded) $\times$ 101 cm.

FIG. 10. The *huipil* 3318.192213 from Cobán is treadle-loomed in white cotton, each of its three panels having two woven and two cut selvages. The lacey look is achieved by alternating bands of gauze weave and loose plain weave with brocade figures in heavier white thread. These include human figures, stars, deer and ducks. The center seams are hand joined in herringbone stitch, and the sides are machine sewn. The lower hem is machine sewn with a trim in commercial eyelet lace. The neck and arms are hand embroidered in cotton with leaves and flowers, and bound in buttonhole stitch. Worn. Collected in 1966. 42 (folded) $\times$ 93 cm.

FIG. 11. The unfinished *huipil* 2648.242213 from Cobán, consisting of three panels, is backstrap loomed in white cotton. Like 3318.192213 (see Fig. 10), bands of gauze weave alternate with bands of open plain weave containing heavier thread brocade figures of corn plants, human figures with horses, and zigzags. The square neck area is left plain, to be cut and finished by the wearer. Panels are hand joined in whipstitch. Collected 1936 by Hedwig Mueller, accessioned 1959. 90 $\times$ 100 cm.

FIG. 12. A close-up view of 2648.242213 (see Fig. 11), unfinished *huipil* from Cobán.

FIG. 13. The unfinished *huipil* 3266.243980 from Cobán is made in white cotton in three panels of backstrap-loomed plain weave, hand joined in whipstitch. The two side panels are brocaded in a heavier white thread in a geometric or leaf pattern, and the center panel in deer, stars, and zigzags, with an unfinished central neck area. Collected 1947–1949 by Caroline Van Evera. 97 $\times$ 89 cm.

FIG. 14. Women wearing the traditional *huipil* at thread stall in the Comalapa market, 1996.

FIG. 15. Doña Lucía Serech, the well-to-do businesswoman and owner of the kitchen in Figure 66, modeled this ceremonial *sobrehuipil* and dated it to 1957. She is wearing it over her everyday *huipil*, skirt and embroidered apron. Comalapa, 1996.

FIG. 16. The ceremonial *huipil* 3523.42812 was made in Comalapa in two panels, in natural handspun brown cotton with red wool *creya* shoulder bar, and silk and cotton figures of horses, plants, corn, vines, and geometric figures in two-faced brocade. Like 3759.269639 (see Fig. 17),

this *huipil* has the typical multichromatic cotton weft stripes, with some stripes including plied blue and white threads as extra-weft wrapping. The neck slit is left unsewn and is trimmed at the bottom of the front with an embroidered flower. Sides show signs of having previously been trimmed. Worn, patched. Collected 1945 by Mrs. R. Livingston. 115 $\times$ 95 cm.

FIG. 17. An everyday *huipil* from Comalapa, 3759.269639 has a white cotton ground, a wide, red wool *creya* or shoulder bar, and the typical multichromatic cotton weft stripes separating geometric and bird and animal brocade figures in silk. The small rhombi, alternating with star-like figures, may be the ancient symbol, *rupan lâq* or *rupan plato*. Some stripes include plied blue and white threads as extra-weft wrapping. Worn. Collected 1937. 61 (folded) $\times$ 102 cm.

FIG. 18. An unusual ceremonial three-panel *sobrehuipil* from Comalapa, 2393.190059 is backstrap-loomed in natural handspun brown cotton, with the traditional red shoulder bar or *creya* and two-faced brocade figures of birds, animals, and geometric figures perfectly aligned and separated by narrow multichromatic weft stripes, worked in silk, wool, and cotton. The round neck opening is hand trimmed with taffeta ribbon and center and shoulder medallions with long loose ribbon tails in pale blue. Collected by Florence D. Bartlett in 1935. 58 (folded) $\times$ 117 cm.

FIG. 19. A ceremonial *huipil* from Comalapa, 2977.190635 is backstrap-loomed with a ground of handspun natural brown cotton and figures brocaded in one and two faces, primarily in silk, also cotton and wool. The two panels are machine joined, leaving a slit neck opening, which is bound in black cotton cloth. The brocade figures are finely woven and include geometric figures, birds, flowers, and leaves in rows, separated by groups of weft stripes, and distinguished at the shoulder by the wide red brocade stripe called the *creya*. Creases from tucks, now removed, run from shoulder to bottom on each side. Accessioned in 1968. 62 (folded) $\times$ 99 cm.

FIG. 20. J. Eric Thompson collected the *huipil* 1820.188540 in Antigua during his 1927 expedition and accessioned it in 1929. It is backstrap-loomed, with four woven selvages for each of the two panels. Like 1820.188528 (see Fig. 30), the ground is natural white cotton and the geometric brocade figures are purple cotton and black wool, the mourning color scheme called "*luto*." The brocade is single-faced, with supplementary continuous wefts. The center and side seams are

whipstitched, leaving very tiny arm and neck holes. Some warp threads are broken, and loopy selvages indicate an inexperienced weaver. While museum records attribute it to San Antonio Aguas Calientes, it was probably made in San Martín Jilotepeque. 58 (folded) $\times$ 73 cm.

FIG. 21. The two-panel *huipil* 2393.189967 is from San Antonio Aguas Calientes. It is backstrap-loomed on indigo cotton ground and covered with geometric silk and cotton figures in one- and two-faced brocade. Contemporary weavers still use the same figures. The center seam is whipstitched, leaving a slit for the neck opening, and the sides are unsewn. Worn and patched on the inside with print commercial cotton. Collected in 1935 by Florence D. Bartlett. 120 $\times$ 78 cm.

FIG. 22. The *huipil* 3523.42815, made in two panels on a dark blue indigo ground, is very finely woven. Precise rows of brocade figures in reflected symmetry include many in the traditional weaving repertoire and is still popular today. The colors in wool and cotton include blue, lavender, red, orange, yellow, green, and white. Neck slit and arm openings are bound in pink satin ribbon and decorated with rosettes of the same. While the *huipil* was purchased in Chichicastenango, it was most likely made in San Antonio Aguas Calientes. Collected 1945 by Mrs. R. Livingston. 62 (folded) $\times$ 76 cm.

FIG. 23. The inside of 3850.167017 reveals differences in brocade techniques. Double-face brocade (*marcador*) has produced the central band of flowers nearly identical to the front face. Single-face brocade has left the decorative supplementary wefts on the front face and only small glimpses of them on the back. Two other bands of thread indicate where white supplementary wefts were carried across the back (see Fig. 24).

FIG. 24. The *huipil* 3850.167017 from San Antonio Aguas Calientes, Sacatepéquez, is backstrap-loomed in two panels with a red cotton ground and an extensive palette of bright colored geometric and naturalistic floral figures, a style originally inspired by Western embroidery pattern books. Any side seams or neck trim have been removed. Identical figures in *marcador* or double-faced brocade are visible on the reverse (see Fig. 23). Accessioned 1992. 84 $\times$ 106 cm.

FIG. 25. Collected in 1927 by J. Eric Thompson and accessioned in 1929, the *huipil* 1820.188547 is from Santa María de Jesús, Sacatepéquez. It is backstrap-loomed, with four selvages on each of the three panels. The ground cloth is natural unbleached cotton, with brocade

figures of chickens, double-headed eagles, frogs, and geometric motifs in black wool and yellow, purple, magenta, green, and blue silk accents. The center panels are whipstitched together. It was sold unfinished, with the sides unsewn and the unbrocaded neck area uncut. 136 $\times$ 69 cm.

FIG. 26. The ceremonial *sobrehuipil* 2977.190639 from Santa María de Jesús is made of natural, unmercerized white cotton ground with red warp stripes and red brocade figures of tree of life, birds, human figures, double-headed eagles, and small animals and geometric figures with multichromatic accents, primarily in cotton with some silk. Backstrap-loomed in three panels, joined by hand with whipstitch in red. The neck opening is square, hand sewn with pink taffeta ribbon trimmed with a medallion of same ribbon. Closed with hook and eye. Armholes hand stitched with green and yellow. Collected by Eva de Smith. Accessioned in 1968. 74 (folded) $\times$ 94 cm.

FIG. 27. The two-panel *huipil* 2977.190640 from Santa María de Jesús is brocaded in cotton in two faces in an overall pattern of linked diamonds sometimes known as *centro del pueblo* figures, primarily in pinks and reds, with some turquoise and yellow. It is backstrap-loomed, with an indigo cotton ground, hemmed in whipstitch, with machine sewn seams. The square neck is bound in black velvet ribbon. New, collected by Eva de Smith, and accessioned 1968. 68 (folded) $\times$ 75 cm.

FIG. 28. The three-panel wedding *huipil* 12.442 presents several layers of elaborate work. The *huipil* is treadle-loomed and joined in machine sewing. It has a white ground with bands of space-dyed *jaspé* wefts in black and white, and purple weft stripes with green, purple, and black geometric brocade figures. On top of this lies a riotous display of machine-embroidered flowers, fruits, people, and animals, framing a pair of quetzal birds, both on the front and the back. The neck is square and trimmed with red velvet on top of the embroidered neck appliqué of plants and animals. The arms are also trimmed in red velvet and then embroidered in yellow braid and metallic embroidered ribbon appliqué. Collected by Bill Goldman, 1992. 66 (folded) $\times$ 64 cm.

FIG. 29. A single width of cotton fabric made for a *perraje* or shawl, with warp stripes in red, green, orange, yellow, pink, cream, and blue, some warp stripes over-dyed with blue in the technique known as *jaspé* (*ikat* or space-dyed threads), and finished with a knotted warp fringe.

Author's collection. Collected in Zunil, 1996. 65 × 182 cm.

FIG. 30. J. Eric Thompson collected the *huipil* 1820.188528 from San Pedro Sacatepéquez (Departamento de Guatemala) during his 1927 expedition and accessioned it in 1929. It is backstrap-loomed, with four woven selvages for each of the two panels. The ground is natural white cotton, and the geometric brocade figures are purple cotton and black wool, the mourning color scheme called “*luto*.” Since the tie-down warps are perfectly aligned in columns, we can see that pattern sticks were used. The center seam is whip-stitched together. The sides are unsewn, and the neck opening uncut, indicating that it was probably made for sale, to be finished by its buyer. 90 × 129 cm.

FIG. 31. A saint's *huipil* is a tiny version of an adult's. This model, 4164.54, is made in one piece but has purple and gold warp and weft stripes characteristic of those marking woven selvages. The ground is white cotton, and the geometric brocade figures in shades of purple, red, pink, and orange are silk and cotton. The sides are open and the neck is embroidered. Accessioned in 2003 and donated by Tony and Kay Marks. 46 × 41 cm.

FIG. 32. A two-panel *huipil* from San Pedro Sacatepéquez, 2393.190066 is backstrap-loomed with a ground of white cotton and purple, red, and green warp stripes along the selvages. Its two-faced brocade figures of birds, a pair of trees of life and double-headed eagles are well aligned in red and purple in cotton and silk. The back presents fewer rows of figures. The center seam is hand sewn and covered with a very fine, tiny purple silk randa, and the sides left open. The neck is hand embroidered in a buttonhole stitch in purple, yellow, and turquoise silk. Because the brocade figures extend to the lower selvages, it is probably, like 3312.288129 (see Fig. 33), a ceremonial *huipil*. Worn. Collected in 1935 by Florence D. Bartlett. 117 × 64 cm.

FIG. 33. The San Pedro Sacatepéquez *huipil* 3312.288129 is elaborately brocaded on the front and less so on the back. It has a ground of white cotton, and figures of two pairs of trees of life, birds, animals, and plants worked in two faces in purple and red. The shoulder band (*mano*) is a pattern of birds with wings extended. The selvages on bottom and open outer edges are of purple cotton, and purple and red at the center where a fine magenta silk randa is added. Around the neck, newer silk buttonhole stitch embroidery partially obscures the older pointed “*puntitos*”

neck embroidery. Because the brocade figures extend to the lower selvages, it is probably, like 2393.190066 (see Fig. 32), a ceremonial *huipil*. Worn. Accessioned 1975. 120 × 66 cm.

FIG. 34. Maya Kaqchiquel women from San Pedro Sacatepéquez, c. 1900. *Señoritas maya-kaqchikeles de San Pedro Sacatepéquez, c. 1900*. By 19th-century ethnographic photographer Alberto G. Valdeavellano, with permission of Colección Valdeavellano, Fototeca Guatemala, Centro de Investigaciones Regionales de Mesoamérica (CIRMA), Antigua, Guatemala.

FIG. 35. The Quetzaltenango *huipil* 162.188862 consists of a single panel of natural white cotton, with two-faced brocade in red cotton, yellow silk, and purple wool made on a floor loom. It is unhemmed at end, and the side seams are machine sewn. The neck is hand embroidered in silk in chain stitch and the buttonhole stitch at the center covers a nonexistent center seam. Two-faced brocade figures include diamonds, other geometric figures, chickens, trees of life, corn plants, turkeys, and other birds. Field Museum record: “*Huipil* of typical Quetzaltenango pattern with birds in profile with angular wings and conventionalized trees. Narrow bands embroidered in gold silk, others in red & purple cotton. Around neck & down center band of yellow, red, & purple silk.” Gift of Guatemalan Government to 1893 Chicago Columbian Exposition. 92 (folded) × 78 cm.

FIG. 36. J. Eric Thompson collected the unfinished *huipil* 1820.188551 panel, floor-loomed of cotton. Said to be from Quetzaltenango, it is more likely from San Martín Jilotepeque, in the “*luto*” mourning colors of purple and black. Field Museum record: “*Huipil* white cotton cloth machine made. Black birds, diamonds and [sigma] on white with little mauve in center of diamonds.” 208 × 51 cm.

FIG. 37. Like the *huipiles* worn by the women in Zanotti's photograph (see Fig. 38), this Quetzaltenango *huipil* 2393.190017 is made in three panels of white cotton, probably floor loomed, and brocaded in silk and cotton geometric figures. The joining seams are covered in silk buttonhole stitch and side seams are sewn. The neck is trimmed with hand-embroidered flowers and it and the armholes are bound in black velvet. Collected in 1936 by Florence D. Bartlett. 117 × 109 cm.

FIG. 38. Early 20th-century photographer Tomás Zanotti, posed this Maya Quiché family group, c. 1930; *Familia Maya-K'icheé de Quetz-*

altenango, c. 1930. The women wear *huipiles* much like 2393.190017 (see Fig. 37). With permission of Colección Tomás Zanotti, Fototeca Guatemala, Centro de Investigaciones Regionales de Mesoamérica (CIRMA), Antigua, Guatemala.

FIG. 39. The three-panel ceremonial *huipil* 2393.190013 from Quetzaltenango is probably floor-loomed because it is cut and hemmed at the bottom. The ground is white cotton, in an open, plain weave. Brocade is single face with some looped-pile detailing, in gold, purple, and white cotton corn plants. The trim is hand embroidered: at the neck in gold, purple, and white leaves and flowers, and over the joining seams in purple leaves. Worn. Field Museum record: "Wedding or ceremonial *huipil*. Background white; design, geometric flowers and 2 strips of realistic brocade [embroidered] leaves down front and back and back, and around neck; colors—purple, orange, and white." Collected by Florence D. Bartlett in 1935. 100 × 128 cm.

FIG. 40. Woman wearing a ceremonial *huipil* similar to 2393.190013 (see Fig. 39) from Quetzaltenango, 1935. With permission of Middle American Research Institute, Tulane University, Matilda Geddings Gray Collection.

FIG. 41. The *huipil* 3967.191502 from Quetzaltenango is treadle-loomed in three panels of two woven and two cut selvages each, joined by machine, with the sides unsewn. It has a white ground with bands of space-dyed *jaspé* wefts in black and white, and purple and gold weft stripes with multicolor geometric brocade figures. The trim of flowers around the round neck is machine embroidered directly on the garment, with a white lamb in the center front. Machine embroidered *randas* of branching red and pink flowers cover the joining seams. Purchased in Totonicapán market by the author in 1995. 52.5 (folded) × 75.3 cm.

FIG. 42. Maya women in Holy Week procession, Quetzaltenango, 1995.

FIG. 43. The three-panel Quetzaltenango *huipil* 4164.29 has been tailored with smocking along two of the joining seams instead of the traditional embroidered *randas* over them. Like 3967.191502 (Fig. 41), it has a white ground with bands of *jaspé* (space-dyed) wefts, in this case in black, magenta and white, and purple and gold weft stripes with geometric brocade figures. The square neck and arms are trimmed in black velvet. Accessioned in 2003 from Tony and Kay Marks. 64 (folded) × 76 cm.

FIG. 44. These *huipils* are brocaded in the nat-

uralistic flower style of San Antonio Aguas Calientes; (A) from Chichicastenango and (B) from Comalapa. The details on the insides show that these weavers are not using the technique of double-face brocade, compared with the examples in Figures 23 and 57.

FIG. 45. Maya woman carrying a load of wood on her back as well as a heavy log on her head. She is wearing her *huipil* inside out to protect the brocade threads. Due to the violence, many women were widowed and must now do men's work as well as women's. Nebaj, Ixil, 1997.

FIG. 46. Accessioned in 1990 but probably dating from the 1960s, the *huipil* 3780.167746 from Chichicastenango is backstrap-loomed with a plain natural white cotton ground. The three panels, although richly brocaded in silk in a pattern of zigzags and double-headed eagles, are extremely worn and preserved only by refurbishing with a new body of flour sacking. The neckband, very worn and frayed, is decorated with both machine-embroidery tape and hand embroidered flowers. 69 (folded) × 68 cm.

FIG. 47. Girl in the market in Chichicastenango, wearing *huipil* of flowery diamond pattern tucked into her tightly wrapped skirt. 1995.

FIG. 48. Girls in Nauhualá, mixing contemporary and traditional dress. 1996.

FIG. 49. Three successful artists and businesswomen from Comalapa, wearing different models of the everyday *huipil* tucked into the skirt, and embroidered aprons. 1996.

FIG. 50. Natural cotton in white and brown known as *íxcaco*, traditionally used for the ceremonial *huipil* of Comalapa, shown with spindles (approximately 42 cm long, pointed on both ends, with a 4–5 cm ball 18 cm from the lower end). Purchased in San Juan Atitlán in 1996.

FIG. 51. Three generations of women in Santiago Atitlán, demonstrating the backstrap loom and the hand spinning of *íxcaco*, or natural brown cotton. 1996.

FIG. 52. Women prepare commercial thread for use on the floor loom. Comalapa, 2004.

FIG. 53. Detail of Cobán *huipil* cloth 3312.288124 showing plain weave with brocade figures in heavier thread alternating with bands of gauze weave (see Fig. 54). Collected in 1940–1941 by Mrs. Harold Norman.

FIG. 54. The Cobán *huipil* 3312.288124, sold unfinished, to be completed by the wearer, backstrap-loomed in white cotton. White brocade figures of animals, humans, plants, and flowers repeat in rows against a lighter weight open plain

weave. The area of the square neck is not brocaded. The three panels are hand whipstitched together. Collected in 1940–1941 by Mrs. Harold Norman. 90 × 96 cm.

FIG. 55. Sample loom with sword, picks, bobbins, shuttle, and backstrap, from San Antonio Aguas Calientes, 2002.

FIG. 56. This detail of *huipil* 2401.190085 from San Antonio Aguas Calientes shows double-faced and single-faced brocade from the inside (see Fig. 57).

FIG. 57. In the *huipil* 2401.190085 from San Antonio Aguas Calientes, a variety of geometric figures are worked in cotton in single- and double-faced brocade, displayed on a ground of indigo cotton. The colors of red, purple, and green predominate with accents of pink, white, yellow, and blue. The two panels are hand joined in the center, leaving the neck and sides unsewn. Collected by Alice K. Gregory, accessioned in 1947. 59 (folded) × 75 cm.

FIG. 58. This detail of *huipil* 2393.190048 from San José Poaquil, near Comalapa, shows two-faced brocade from the inside (see Fig. 59).

FIG. 59. The two-panel *huipil* 2393.190048 from San José Poaquil, near Comalapa, is backstrap loomed in natural handspun brown cotton and brocaded in two-faced figures of birds and animals in silk, cotton, and red wool. The center seam is whipstitched, leaving the neck slit unsewn, and sides are also unsewn. Collected by Florence D. Bartlett in 1935. 100 × 102 cm.

FIG. 60. Examples of tapestry-weave belts from Comalapa. Author's collection.

FIG. 61. Maya girl, showing the work she has done on her backstrap looms. The narrow loom is for belts and hair ribbons, which may be made in tapestry weave or plain weave, and the wider loom holds nine repeats of a flower pattern to be cut into squares, destined for products for the American market. Comalapa, 1996.

FIG. 62. The two-panel *huipil* 2401.190082 from San Pedro Sacatepéquez is backstrap loomed, with two-faced brocade geometric figures in red cotton and silk on a natural white cotton ground. There are multicolor accents and red warp and weft selvages. The center seam is joined with a plain, narrow purple *randa*, and the side seams are unsewn. The round neck is bound with purple silk in buttonhole stitch and magenta, tur-

quoise, and yellow, with small points. This *huipil* is very similar to the *huipil* worn by the woman on the right in the photograph by Valdeavellano, “San Pedranas” (see Fig. 34), from the historical collection at CIRMA, Antigua, Guatemala. Collected by Alice K. Gregory, accessioned in 1947. 118 × 64 cm.

FIG. 63. Neck detail of *huipil* 2401.190082 from San Pedro Sacatepéquez, showing the old style of embroidered points terminating in crosses, called *pachak* in Kaqchiquel (see Fig. 62).

FIG. 64. Woman weaving products for the Guatemalan-American not-for-profit MayaWorks, using a treadle loom. The pedals raise sets of threads to facilitate weaving a pattern. Comalapa, 2004.

FIG. 65. Men weaving fabric on a draw loom, destined for artisan products for the tourist market. The man in the foreground is pulling on strings to raise sets of threads in a complicated repeating pattern. Only part of the hand of the seated weaver is visible at the far end of the loom. Comalapa, 1996.

FIG. 66. Women making tortillas by hand and baking them over a wood fire in a kitchen in well-to-do home. They are dressed in traditional *huipiles* fashionable at this time, skirts and highly decorated aprons. Comalapa, 1996.

FIG. 67. The backstrap-loomed *huipil* panels at this market stall in Chichicastenango are available in the naturalistic flower style of San Antonio Aguas Calientes or two local patterns: large flowery diamonds or zigzags with double-headed eagle, available as panels to mix and match. Shoppers could also purchase weaving thread in hanks, or embroidery floss. Chichicastenango, 1995.

FIG. 68. *Ladina* women carrying a figure of the Virgin Mary in the Good Friday procession across a carpet of flowers, colored sawdust, and pine needles. The pattern of the carpet has been disturbed by the passage of the Christ figure across it. Antigua, 1995.

FIG. 69. Each small ceramic cross on the wall of this church in the small town of Cotzal bears the name and age of a person killed or disappeared in the violence during the years 1972–1996. 2001.

FIG. 70. This woman wears a complete ensemble of *traje* for Holy Week, while waiting for the patron saints of her town to be carried in the Good Friday procession. Santiago Atitlan, 2001.

Figures

Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4

Figure 5

Figure 6

Figure 7

Figure 8

Figure 9

Figure 10

Figure 11

Figure 12

Figure 13

Figure 14

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Figure 16

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Figure 36

Figure 37

Figure 38

Figure 39

Figure 40

Figure 41

Figure 42

Figure 43

A

B

Figure 44

Figure 45

Figure 46

Figure 47

Figure 48

Figure 49

Figure 50

Figure 51

Figure 52

Figure 53

Figure 54

A. Cord	I. Cloth Beam
B. Warp Beam	J. Cord to Backstrap
C. Warp Threads	K. Backstrap
D. Shed Roll or Shed Stick	L. Shuttle
E. Needle	M. Bobbins
F. Small Batten	N. Pick
G. Tenter with Pins	O. Sword
H. Woven Cloth	

Figure 55

Figure 56

Figure 57

Figure 58

Figure 59

Figure 60

Figure 61

Figure 62

Figure 63

Figure 64

Figure 65

Figure 66

Figure 67

Figure 68

Figure 69

Figure 70

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